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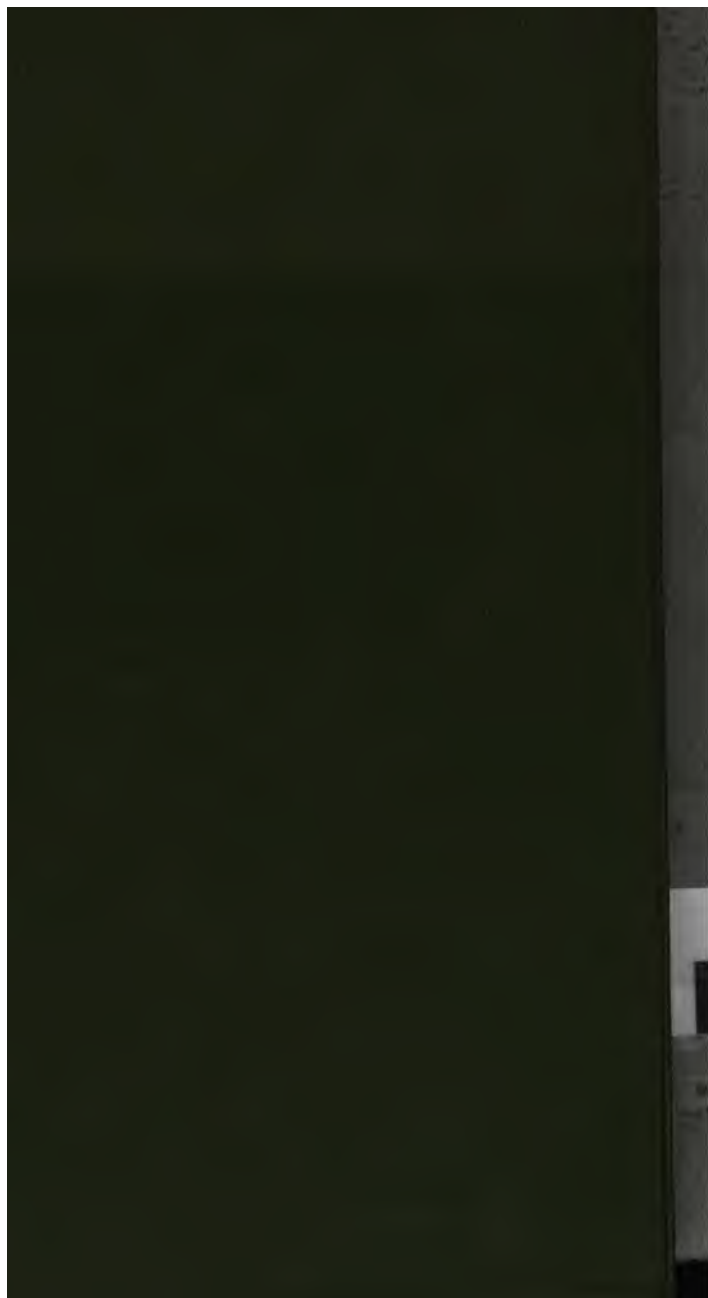
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FROM A BOOK FUND COMMEMORATING
RUTH GERALDINE ASHEN
CLASS OF 1931

It's a sad thing
when a man is to be so soon forgotten
And the shining in his soul
gone from the earth
With no thing remaining;

And it's a sad thing
when a man shall die
And forget love
which is the shiningness of life;

But it's a sadder thing
that a man shall forget love
And he not dead but walking in the field
of a May morning
And listening to the voice of the thrush.

—R.G.A., in *A Yearbook of
Stanford Writing*, 1931

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THE
FOUNTAIN OF SORROW
AND
RIVER OF JOY.

MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

S O R R O W.

THE

F O U N T A I N O F S O R R O W

AND

R I V E R O F J O Y.

BY THE

REV. GILBERT BERESFORD, B.D.,

RECTOR OF HOBY WITH ROTHERBY, LEICESTERSHIRE; HON.
CANON OF PETERBOROUGH; FORMERLY FELLOW OF
ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE POEM.



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PENITENTIAL—in Peter and Mary Magdalene.

PERFECT—that of Christ.

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ERRATA.

- Page 71, line 3, *for* 'gleaming,' *read* 'gleaning.'
- „ 121, „ 17, *for* 'seem,' *read* 'seen.'
- „ 177, „ 11, *for* 'to,' *read* 'do.'
- „ 193, „ 17, *for* 'withdrawn,' *read* 'withdraw.'
- „ 198, „ 11, *for* 'spirit,' *read* 'Spirit.'
- „ 211, „ 15, *for* 'bring,' *read* 'brings.'

SORROW.



DESPONDENT—PENITENTIAL—PERFECT.

THOU askest, Have I sorrow in my heart ?

Go ask the ocean, Has it waves in it ?

Or ask the sands, If you may count them o'er ?

Or ask the stars, If they be numberèd ?

Then should the stars reply, ' We're numberless ;'

The sands, ' We're countless as infinity ;'

Should ocean pass before thee in its depth—

Should ocean's waves pass by in miniature,

Till wave succeeding wave had fill'd thine eye

2

With waves more countless e'en than ocean had ;
Then would I tell thee that I've sorrow here—
Tears that would laugh at ocean's emptiness ;
I have a tear to put out every star
That spangles in the studded firmament ;
I have a tear to drink up every grain
That in the scorched desert owns a space,
Tho' but the millionth part of what might serve
A gnat to rest on : not less infinite
The sorrow that has flooded and perforce
Drenches my heart with every coming wave.

.
.
.

But—but I'll turn away a little space ;
I'll turn mine eye upon a lighted cloud
Or some white speck of heaven that shall be to it
As rills of water to the parched tongue :
So shall mine eye rest softly on the dawn
And lightsome breaking in of opening heaven.

Said I that I would turn ? No, no, not I ;
There must a greater power be than mine,
Greater than man's or angel's, aught create
In nether, middle, or supernal air :
Not less than His, Who, with the Eternal Son,
Spake nothing into being ; by whose power
Light was ; new-born, creation's monument,
Day's spring ; unknown before, for darkness felt
Hung o'er the formless void : nor less than His,
First moving on the dark unstoried waters,
Co-equal He, the Holy One : not less
Can move the stagnant surface of the soul,
Can bid light be in the abode of night,
And out of nothing call the things that are :
So, than Divine not less must be the power
To draw this heart of woe from fix'd despair
To look on sorrow lit with tears of hope.

For sorrow has two currents in the heart :
The one is natural grief, born at our birth ;

Sorrow that, like the maelstrom, drowns the soul
In its black eddies and its dooming swoop :
The other is the after-child of Heaven,
A foundling, given to some, not all, to rear ;
But where'er given, it swallows up the first ;
Sorrow that poureth out its real tide
Before the eye of Heaven—High Alchemist
That turns the leaden waters into gold.

The one is like the heavy-sounding splash
Of ocean beating on a sunken rock ;
The other like that same rock gushing forth
With living waters from its riven side :
The former was the ocean'd woe of Judas
That ever tried, but could not break its bounds ;
And, like a troubled sea that cannot rest,
Whose waters disembowel their refuse,
Drank itself inly, like an ebbing wave
Returning on itself, and found no peace.
The latter was the quicken'd grief of Peter—

The riven rock in tears ! Nor gushing stream
Refreshèd Israel's wanderers, as these
Their wither'd wanderer in worse wilderness.
For they had murmur'd ; Peter had blasphemed ;
Theirs was a drought that any wave might quench,
Tho' God alone could pour it on them there ;
His was a thirst that only God could give
Or ever take away. They drank indeed—
Visibly all Sin's wanderers, doubly they
Who in those mystic waves the soul's refreshment
Sought for—the living, spiritual Rock ;
Whose basin'd waters thro' the burning sands
Follow'd their devious steps—type of those streams
Of crimson and of water from the side
Of Him who shed His blood and shed His Spirit—
The Rock that follow'd them ; that Rock was Christ.
But Peter drank the very tears of Christ—
He drank the very presence of his God !
' Then the Lord look'd on Peter.'

That look had in it

(In very likeness of that troubled Rock)
Sorrow and tears—most like to gushing streams
Sheeting themselves in their own silveriness ;
So the Lord's mien of sorrow hid his tears :
Awakening in it—like those self-same streams
Making all nature burst in streams of joy ;
So waken'd it the sealèd fount within :
And *healing* in it—like those waters still ;
Their very sight was healing—His was more ;
That look was flooded with a memory
That of the adamant made pulpy flesh,
The millstone softer than a baby's palm,
That crumbled into dust the heart of rock,
And raised a living temple to his God :
' And Peter went out and wept bitterly.'

Or else,

I would refuse to look—I cannot raise
Mine eyes to meet the look that's bent on me—
That look of pity. No ; but I will stand

Behind Him weeping and bow'd down in sorrow.
My grief shall take the semblance of a lake :
For fulness, fill'd to the brim of overflowing ;
For calmness, steadied by its own deep flood ;
For depth, beyond the fathom of all thought ;
For magnitude, unbounded, ever-widening,
Save on the utmost verge hope rears its forests
And giant brow to heaven's glassy portal,
And brings down light from thence. So would I
mourn,
And let Heaven mirror in my bosom'd woe.
So would I bathe His feet ; and tho' I had not
A woman's hair to be their handkerchief,
Tho' I'd no precious ointment—had no kiss,
Yet would I weep with Mary Magdalene
(There's nothing womanish in tears for sin),
And should receive that blessing, ' Go in peace ;
Thou art forgiven, for thou lovedst much.'

Thy tears were equall'd to thy much love, Mary !

And so were His ! His love's infinitude
Begot infinitude of tears and sorrow.
If hers were many—His were measureless ;
' His was compassion like a God.' There met
And kissèd in that word the two extremes,
The two infinitudes of love and sorrow.
'Twas love that brought Him down from heaven to
earth,
And then love's tears they were that drank our sins.
His sorrow drank the whole sins of a world,
And dried, if we may say so, hell itself ;
Innocuous thence for man (for Satan still
And his demoniac crew accursèd left)
If men would but repent, and in His grief
Dry their own sorrow up.

I.

PERFECT IN CONCEPTION.

CONCEPTION is the freest thing that is :
Free as the air we breathe—the light we see—
The warmth that warms us—or the wind that blows
And thro' the hollow heavens laugheth on,
Or shrieketh as it lists—the world's foundling,
Birthless and deathless—and heaven's orphan,
More sighs than smiles ; such is conception.
Only more rare, more free, more exquisite,
Being of all free things the multiple.
As should we multiply the suing South
Into the shrieking and shrill-piping North,

Or marry all the airs of the soft West
With every icy fang of the keen East,
Yet were conception far more manifold ;
And comes, we know not whence, upon the brain,
And in essential freedom passes on
We know not whither, and a heaven of lightness
Leaves on her stepless track.

If ever came the light from yonder sun—
If ever blew the wind from yonder west—
If ever drank we in the air of heaven
Free, then more free—a thousand times more free
Cometh conception on our waking spirit,
And holdeth holiday.

And if to us
It cometh with the franchise of High Heaven,
Conception ! what must be thy Fount—thy Being !
I know not whether grace—that thing of God
We esteem freest and most uncompell'd,
Whether as resident itself in God,

Or in free favour given—I know not whether
Freer it is than to conceive, with God :
Rather twin-infinities of freeness are they
The infinite of Love Divine o'erlying,
One to resolve, the other to devise.

HIS grief was perfect in conception.
Things in the bare conceit are great, not done,
When he who would lacks opportunity.
Nay, some there are whose want of execution
Shrines them in new and charm'd nobility.
Such was the deed of that French pilot-boy,
Who, year by year, had with his father made
His home upon the waters—the bright waters—
The false—false, treacherous waters ! Storm and
calm
And calm and storm had wrought their firm affec-
tions
Into each other, and of twain made one :

The father's life was bound up in the lad's ;
He lived a charm'd life in his father's presence :
Summer and winter, calm and storm, day, night,
Were, with his father, as a pleasant dream ;
To see his father's daring, was to dare ;
Suffering, to suffer ; in his laugh, he laugh'd ;
And in his weeping, wept ; in his life, lived.
But on a day the cradling waters rage,
The wild wind shrieketh in the hollow heavens,
Day's lights are out and night's, and triple darkness
Holds its mid empire unassail'd, save when
The fork'd and jagged lightning cleaves the night ;
Or the usurping waves, piled mountain high,
To heaven's cope drive back the Stygian hosts.
Full many a league were they in midmost ocean ;
Full gallantly the noble bark did ride ;
Full manfully the noble son and father
Did ply their task and task'd their utmost skill.
And now they near the port, and beacon-fires
Are flaming on the shore and on the cliff,

And women in the sternness of their grief
Are wildly waving torchlights to and fro :
And now undaunted hearts have mann'd a boat,
And limbs all nerve have launch'd her in the deep—
The dark wild chaos of the sea and sky :
They come—they come—to the rescue of the brave !
But wilder shrieks the blast, surges the wave
To the very topmost—where is the noble bark ?
The father and the son—where—where are they ?
They sink together in the yawning chasm—
They rise together on the billowing wave—
And now strong arms are out to grasp them twain :
Safe in the life-boat stands the rescued son,
But there—alone—his father had gone down.
An instant—and the son is in the waves—
What arm could hold him back—bind him what
 cord ?
Love snaps the green withes like a gossamer—
He dashes down into the caves of ocean
To rescue, if he may ; if not, to die.

That were not possible to be saved alone—
Saved and his father lost ! best death than that :
That were not life to live without his father :
That were not death to die if in one grave.

Calm grew the storm ere morning, and the sea
Spread o'er them both its white ungather'd shroud ;
And woman's cheeks are wet—men fail to tell
That high emprise and deed of deathless love.

Heroic deeds are of one family,
Which not a nation's enmity can sever,
A world-wide difference of birth estrange,
Nor power of man disjoint. True heroism
Exceeds all time, careless of fortune's wheel,
And smiling at that changeeful alchemist
Chance, changes not. On that tall eminence,
That unassaulted height, in golden ease,
Encircled with the flowering amaranth,
My country's enemy may sit my comrade,

And folded in one cloak we sleep together ;
The low-born peasant be my high compeer ;
He be my brother kiss'd—caress'd although
The soot is on his brow, and as of yore
A Lazarus be a hidden prince and king.

Yet every deed of man, noblest conceived,
Is only noble by comparison,
And tested by that false weight—imperfection.
But His in thought was perfect. For with God
To do, is to conceive ; conceive, to do.
'Tis so ; 'Let there be light, and there was light ;'
'He spake, and it was done.' For words and
acts
Are thoughts with God : and then thoughts, words,
and acts
Are Divine will, whose commensurate power
Casts over all instant accomplishment—
Accomplishment of cause and consequence,
Accomplishment alike of means and end.

When, then, to heal our woes God design'd
sorrow,

Ay, sorrow's fullest cup—self-sacrifice—
His equal Son to die, 'twas done ; 'The Lamb
From the foundation of the world was slain ;'
Time being not with God nor past nor future,
All one eternal present.

Add to this

That His self-sacrifice foreclosed all need,
Met every want, left nothing unattain'd,
But to the eye of that inveterate foe
Who watches to destroy—sleeps not to slay,
Presented, from the armoury of God,
Salvation's panoply invulnerable ;
Where not his keenest eye, quicken'd with rage
Steep'd in immortal juice of jealousy
And hatred interfused, could flaw discern,
Crevice or joint, thro' which the barb'd point
(Were it a needle) or of spear or arrow
Could pierce ; nor whereon lay the subtle poison,

Afresh from his envenom'd fangs, distil
And breed corruption in God's perfect work.

Add yet again the source from whence it came :
It sprang from infinite love. Love Divine
Eternally design'd His grief to flow ;
Compulsion was there none, for grace resolved :
And thus the love of God resign'd His Son.
The love of Christ was as the morning dew,
Free as immaculate ; His bitter pains—
The travail of His soul for man's redemption—
Gethsemane, Thy sweat, Thy purple tide !
Thy nails, Thy death, Thy cross, Calvary !—this
The dew, Emmanuel ! of Thy birth. Nor ever
Sprang from the womb of morn, heaven's crystal
gate,
The unseen, unbidden shower, refreshing earth
Spontaneous as that : and in that dew
Lay noble, godlike forms, redeemèd souls,
More numerous than the crystal drops of morn,

And robed in purity more clear than they,
The stars of a new heaven and new earth
Ever to spangle in Christ's diadem.
Perfect His love's first offer ; so complete
His love's surrender. Heaven's unsullied dome,
His Father's bosom, His Creatorship
Arrested not His eye from death self-sought ;
'His pity ne'er withdrew,' 'He looked not back.'
Nor did the Eternal Spirit withhold His due :
Confederate in one the Triune God.

* As yestere'en

I marked yon star, that now sits president
O'er our sad earth, it shot a ray of fire
Into the heavens, and then took it back.
'Twas of one nature with its parent-star,
It went to do that pure star's high behest,

* Added in allusion to the death of the Prince Consort,
December 14, 1861, when the ms. was in the printer's
hands.

And then flash'd back into the parent-breast.
Then thought I, Sorrow is the child of Glory—
From God it did in glory emanate ;
When it went forth, it went forth in glory ;
In the same glory it is back again.
O ! ever will I love to think that Sorrow—
Past being robed in spontaneity,
Past being broider'd with infinity,
Past having on infallibility—
The child of Glory is and Deity !
So could I fancy just as one lone star,
Doth march into the solemn Even heaven,
And like ' a watcher and an holy one '
Look down in sorrow on this sorrowing earth,
And will not take its ray away, till when
It hath led in a thousand thousand more,
And chance the crescent moon, or chance the full,
Till its bright fellow usher in the sun ;
So could I fancy in the Heaven of heavens
(Whose glory, from all creature ken and thought

Alike, is hidden in solemnity),
Whether more like the sorrowing star of eve,
Or whether most it was the morning-star,
SORROW rose up, from the august conclave,
And to the zenith pass'd of heavens' Heaven,
Shedding new light throughout the infinite,
And, standing over earth, veil'd her in sheen.
And there, unlike these fleeting stars of ours
(Or like them, for their cadence only seems,
While from their watch-towers ever they look down
On earth and their true-hearted vigil keep),
Would watch upon the earth whole centuries
And never, never tire, but faithfully
Would comfort her with myriad myriad rays,
Till itself did put off the seeming star,
And in the glory of the Sun of suns
Visit this nighted world.

For tho' in Heaven sorrow cannot be
To make Heaven sorrowful, where all is joy ;

Yet Sorrow did in glory take its birth
Fresh from the bosom of God, conceived in glory,
But so apparellèd in Heavenly joy,
Burning to swallow up all other sorrow
And wipe away all tears from every eye,
Endued with such foretaste of ecstasy,
That Sorrow's self was glad, nor heaven could
dream
That it was sorrow.

II.

PERFECT IN PREPARATION.

SUCH was the source and compass of His sorrow ;
And thought was execution.

Nor was it less

In preparation perfect. Grief must have
A shroud to lie in. His was rarely wrought :
Never was grief so usher'd in as His ;
Never had sorrow such habiliments ;
Never a tragedy such harbingers.
'Twas without seam, wove from the top throughout ;
'Twas in itself most delicate in texture ;
'Twas in all colours most elaborate.

The golden hues of joy so temper'd were
With the dark dye of gloom, as made His sorrow
Most exquisite to look on. Then, again,
They'd fall upon such contrast as would make
Sorrow sole empress. By and by, the folds
Were in themselves so sorrowful, as lent
Sorrow relief, and to her blanch'd cheek laid
The pale, unearthly white, then every shade
Akin to sorrow in such order choice
Of delicate hues, each blending into each,
As distanced lustre, and left joy's vermilion
To flaunt at will. Such was the swaddling-band
That enwrapp'd sorrow's babe. Rather there were
Three veils and interwoven did emmantle
Down to the feet the sacred child of sorrow :
Threefold, and blending, and yet separate,
So you might take off one nor spoil the others.

More exquisite in texture was there one :
Faint to the death at first, its pureness grew

More and more vivid as adown it flow'd,
Like dew from Hermon's sacred top to the base.
Each fibre was awake with inspiration,
And breathed celestial flame, which animates
Matter alike and spirit, for in heaven
'Gold is all glass, and all the glass is gold :'
Till as it grew to the life, and itself seem'd
Pregnant with heavenly fire, it closed ; for now
'T had run its length, and would not unfold more.

Ever on this, yet to remove at will,
Lay a rare woof of purple, which to that
Gave colouring rich, not mix'd, but to the eye
Ran thro' it like a river, or the bow
That spans and purples heaven.

O'er these again
Was laid a subtile veil, wrought wondrously
In figures to the life, and changing scenes
That baffled nature, being more natural
And yet transparent and of portent full,

Such as no limner yet nor sculptor drew ;
Nor wonder, for with each stroke the artist gave
His hand was bathed in heaven.

These

Lay o'er His cradle for a coverlet.
Around, and moulded to the human form,
Lay yet another veil, more wondrous still.
'Twas of wrought sorrow, yet the high impress
Made it of snow-white purity ; nor sin
That ever had defiled all other sorrow,
Had tainted that, tho' only sorrow's outwork.
Holy it was, and harmless, undefiled,
And separate from sin, impregnable
To that insidious foe. 'Twas doubly wrought :
Without 'twas flesh—pure flesh, amenable
To all the thousand incidents of life—
Hunger and thirst, noon's heat and midnight cold,
To weariness and pain, and all the ills
That flesh is heir to ; not from death exempt,

But from corruption ; liable, alone
Thro' self-surrender, to death's filmy bands,
Fleeting as gossamer to the potent will
Of Him whose own it was to put off death
And scare the usurper from his short-lived tenure.
Within, the unspotted fabric of the soul,
Whose every temple—of the thought, the will,
The feelings, the affections, mind and spirit—
Being alike to sin impervious,
Lay open to the visitings of Heaven,
Which held high nuptials there and interchange
Purest and freest of essential Love.

Such was the veil prepared for Him of God :
'Twas of the virgin mother, therefore human ;
It was of Power Divine—Divine conception,
Therefore immaculate and holiest.
Within this, as a casket, lay the pearl
Of sorrow—the Infinite God—infinite grief
(For God to suffer in His human veil

Gives to His manhood infinite endurance),
To swallow up man's woe, nor count it sorrow
For the joy set before Him.

But ere we onward pass, once more I view
The goodly land o'er which we've pass'd anon,
This land of mystery and wonderment.

Backward I take my stand at heaven's gate—
The gate of heaven then, though changed how soon!
Where our first father and his hapless self
Were separate from their Maker scarcely more
Than are the veiled-gazing seraphim ;
The gate of heaven, to them all open once !
The gate of heaven now, though closed so fast !
The gate of heaven to us ! for cometh thence
The light that dawn'd upon our world of woe.

On Eden's holy mount I take my stand,

Beneath His sheltering wings Who covers sin,
And there I look upon the dawning light—
The dawn ? clear day—bright day—save to our
eyes,
That veiled are to see its mystery :
And there I look upon the opening rill—
The rill ? the open stream—the broaden'd river—
The welling ocean—the unfathom'd fount,
Impassable except to sightless feet.

Is it at first that to our mortal ken,
Fond stream of hope from heaven issuing !
Thou seemest small and scarce discernible ?
Art thou as when the lingering shades of night
Stand in the face of day to keep her back,
Till piercèd with her serried subtle sheen
They fall before her glowing chariot-wheels ?
Art thou as when the veiling cloud o'ercasts
The face of risen day ? Art thou as when
The sun at noonday pales his angry beams

Before the struggling all-usurping vapours ?
Art thou as when upon the glassy tide
St. Lawrence ! of thy broad, unflooded waters,
Ere the day break, coucheth the amorous mist,
Pale to the death for love, then stretching forth
Her white arms to the cruel monster sun,
That comes to spoil her of her reverie,
Disrobe her of her folds of virgin snow,
And, limb by limb, dispart her aery mould,
To hold his bridal with the ocean-child ?

Seemest thou small and less discernible ?
Perchance it is as when two atmospheres
Meet in the vacant heavens, and one perforce
Doth with its somewhat leaden influence
O'ercast the silver of the other's breath ;
Or when two rivers meet—yet mingle not,
The darker doth o'erlay the crystalline :
So it may be that river out of Heaven,
To meet the dark tide of our sinning world,

Doth gather, underneath, its unmix'd tide ;
So it may be the very air of Heaven,
To touch the atmosphere of this poisonous earth,
Doth recollect its own divinity,
And gather in its lustre.

But if to mortal eyes thou must be small—
A slender stream from heaven's mount descending ;
And if to mortal eyes thou must be pale—
A light that struggleth for mastery ;
Be so. Mine eye—mine eye is on thy morn
As its first streaks are breaking out of heaven ;
Mine eye—mine eye is on that rivulet
As first it glideth to our drooping Eden,
Not closed till that thou didst anoint her dearth,
Not closed till thou didst dawn upon her death,
And gav'st her promise that in aftertime
Thou wouldest make a fairer paradise.

But as I look, the broader breaks the day,

Broader the river windeth on its way :
It seems as tho' the sun would burst the veil
That scarcely hides it from the longing earth,
And from thy bosom lift the gossamer,
Or is't thy silver breath, thou shining river ?
And as I gaze, 'tis triple-folded light,
White, purple, various ; and answering
Threefold the waters of that gladdening stream.
The first are waves of molten argentry ;
The next as had the purple of all roses
Left their pale folds to make the white waves blush ;
The third past wonder are diversified.

Or is it that the light from Eden streaming
Doth to our inner eye throw back the folds,
And heaven open hold to let our gaze
Pass to the presence of the Invisible ?
Is it the purple of that mystic stream
Doth to the outer sense make tangible
His else escaping attributes, ' Who dwells

In light ' which not an angel's eye may scan ?
Sueth the one our faith, the other—sight,
To make our dark souls ravishèd with light ?
Our double selves need twofold aliment ?
And prophecy doth on the promise feed
Heaven's first-born—faith ; whiles her more earthly
sister

Is nourish'd with the red tide ever-flowing,
And with such living, real imaginings
As make the what shall be to be, soon as
The thread shall draw the curtaining mist aside
And let the full sun in ; or rather, when
The sun with his full splendour doth the veil
Unravel, and with conscious majesty
Lead in the virgin day ? Tho' well I wot
That faith—that holder of the invisible,
Fed while she feeds us with the things not
seen—

Her very being and embodiment
Takes from the nectar of that purple wave.

Or is it that mine eye, adown the stream
From Eden flowing, seeth on either side
Pillars of light—whether from earth to heaven
Or heaven to earth I know not, for they stand
Upon the solid globe, yet they upbear
These outer heavens and let the within be seen ?
Transparent are they, and of such heavenly
mould

As e'en an angel would draw breath to see ;
And these on either side like tall shafts rise,
And as the river widens loftier grow,
And heaven summit with their height ; the while
The river, that at Eden's mount did flow
So purely pale, doth purple in its flight
And broader grows and crimson in its hue,
Altho' withal 'tis veil'd, as it were not,
Yet was ; and on its banks are figures seen
As if of heavenly mould, and yet of earth,
That talk to us from childhood to old age,
And wind themselves about our hearts' affections,

That speak to us of heaven, and ever point—
Point to that purple stream—those crystal pillars.

Mine eye is on that light—is on that river :
I see it ever widening as it flows ;
And those pure columns, as they were all light
And flame of heaven, on its either side,
And in it casting all their sheen, as tho'
The river did run silver with their light ;
And then the things of earth, to make us feel
That heaven is real to us, reflected they
In that broad—widening—silvery—purpling river.

Bright fount of light ! Immeasurable river !
Mine eye is on thy sheen as thou dost come
Flooded from heaven to our hapless Eden,
Thence to flow onward thro' time's period,
Till, on the ocean-bed of light, thou liest
And art in heaven again. Bright fount of light !
Immeasurable river ! flow—flow on !

Ye centuries, stand back and open wide—
Wider your doors and let the streaming light
From out the eye of heaven make glad this earth !
Down the long vista pass, thou smile divine,
And bathe this blacken'd orb in flushing day !

What is't I see ? As fall the centuries back—
Gleam the white pillars—wideneth the stream,
Cometh the bridegroom forth ! Those myriad
shafts

Stoop and unfold their lustre at His feet—
Lieth the river in his golden light—
But stay, what is't I see ? 'Tis noon, but yet
Thro' that long vista 'tis as tho' the sun
At noon were reddening to the occident ;
The sun—the sun at noon setteth in blood,
To rise—but set no more !

Ye pillars rise !

Stand on your silvery feet—your anthems peal
Into the heart of heaven till this earth quake—

Quake with your trumpet-voicèd echoings !
Stand on your silvery feet, and let them flash—
Flash the vermilion thro' your folds of flame !
And thou, thou stream, flow back ! Thou hast
 caught the light—
The blush—the crimson of the setting sun ;
And every wave thy broaden'd tide within
Lifts its pure ruby up into the sheen,
And thro' all centuries glanceth back to Eden,
And makes her morning noon, her fount an ocean,
And all the mystic imagery of earth
Clothes with transparent day. ' Out of Zion
In perfect beauty God hath shined ; ' and thence,
Ere time was cradled in the dewy lap
Of morn, yon setting Sun did cast his beams
Beyond earth's orient into the virgin-womb
Of everlasting Day, and purpled Heaven :
And when young Time shall lay his aching head
Upon the broad lap of Eternity,
And breathe his last breath in his father's arms,

Down to earth's latest west that Sun shall roll
His tide of glory, and in Heaven's hues
Crimson this sinking world.

Oh may my skiff
Ride in those purple waters ! Keep me in
That red, red tide ! Let me be borne up on it !
Let me be wafted into blushing heaven !
Oh keep me in it ! let me not pass the bourn !
Keep me in that red gleam that o'er the waters
Comes in its deep, deep channell'd tide to save !
Keep me, oh keep me in it ! Neither side
Let me be borne into the unchannell'd way—
Deep into deep for ever sinking lower,
Till, in the lowest depth, they sink at last :
Keep me in that red gleam—bright gleam—
Heaven's gleam !
And not alone ; with me, my better self,
My poet-daughter, and my first-born son,
And children sweet as day ere smiled upon,

My happy daughter of a Christmas morn,
And he my fairest, and my youngest-born ;
And all allied by blood, or right, or love,
And if on earth I have an enemy,
Within that reddening gleam, oh may we sail,
And onward, onward into opening heaven !

III.

PERFECT IN ITSELF.

THUS faultlessly conceived, and usher'd in
As faultlessly, so not less His sorrow
Was perfect in itself.

Perfect, for sinless. They were tears of God ;
Or, since that God does not and cannot weep,
They were man's sinless tears—man's sinless tears ?
And when did man weep but in sinfulness ?
When was the fountain of his grief unmix'd ?
When was the channel of his grief unstain'd ?
Nay, every tear of sorrow that has blanch'd

The cheek of that so-called innocence
Has a foul blot in it. 'Tis overcharged,
And trespasses on rank idolatry ;
Or else, 'tis slack, trickling, and nicely-measured ;
Self-harming or self-pleasing heaviness.
Some are grief's counterfeits : the new-made heir,
Beneath his ill-worn mask and cloak of gloom,
Gaily ascending to his patrimony :
The widow in a hurried twelve-month bride,
Led to the altar o'er her husband's grave.
But those which do commend themselves to
nature—

The bridegroom widow'd on his bridal day ;
The father frenzied for his only son ;
The mother clasping still her cold first-born ;
Brother for youngest brother sorrowing ;
Sister on sister's grave quick following ;
The babe, with the first breath it draws of
air—

Ay, that soft glistening drop upon the cheek

Of infancy, ill-cradled on the waters,
That woke the latent mother's sympathy—
A princely sorrow in a princely breast,
When the rude ark of bulrushes reveal'd
The jewell'd casket and the shrined pearl,
And the rash gazer's eye, incontinent,
Wept, for the babe was weeping—these alike,
The iron tear of manhood, and the soft,
The silken, silvery cords of woman's grief,
The babe's, an hour as a twelve-month old,
Are all sin-drawn—all have the loathsome taint ;
And be it man's or woman's, child's or babe's,
All run sin-stain'd. Why? for the fount is
sin ;

For without sin, sorrow had not been born :
And since sin is the fount, the channel sin,
Altho' the river of their grief ran crystal,
It makes all foul—foul in the eyes of Him
Who challenges the whiteness of the heavens,
And with defect charges His Seraphim.

When wept man angel's tears? and could they
weep

(Which they cannot, or Heaven were made sad,
And Heaven knows not even unsullied sorrow,
But all is spangling joy), but could they weep,
Their tears were honeyed drops, and Heaven's
pavements

Would blossom o'er with flowers. But when
man weeps,

He weeps the brine of sin : all human griefs,
The princely and the servile, false and fair,
The counterfeit, the true, sin's baldrick wear ;
In some the tide of sin runs high, some low ;
But yet in all the plague and poison flow.
So every tear that Sorrow sheds is blanch'd
With guilt—is foul—is leprous : in sin womb'd,
It takes perforce its mother's lineaments.
Their tears but flow in sin ; be it for sin
Thro' quickening of the Spirit ; or from sin
Working their final woe—its bitter fruits ;

Or should it be the fair and fruitless current
Flows in the channel of soft sympathy ;
Yet all alike of sin.

His were man's tears, and yet his tears were sinless !
Not sinless that they flow'd for others' sin,
Not sinless that they flow'd not for His own ;
But being sinless, so they flow'd for sin,
Being themselves to sin impregnable.
Thus God in human nature bore our sin.
If you might fancy but one pearly drop
Borne to the midmost ocean, midway deep ;
'Tis of one nature with surrounding ocean,
And yet not mixes in it—bears, but is free :
So was His human nature one with ours,
So did His human nature bear our sin,
So was His human nature free from sin,
For God was in it ; therefore perfect, sinless.
And God did make His human nature weep—
His sinless human nature for man's sin :

And I should think, had Adam wept in Eden,
It would have made creation droop and die.
But ere he sinn'd, he had no cause to weep,
And since things need a cause, he could not weep ;
But now earth looks upon the sinless tears
Of God and Man in one, and will not weep !
Did ever earth witness such hardihood ?
Did ever earth witness such avarice ?
Not weep, and God weeps ! O cruel, insensate
world !

Lay—lay thine hand on the chasm of thine eyes,
And hide them from the face of heaven and day !
Put out their monster lights that hold all else
Created weeping or else petrified
At such hell-bound insensibility !
Not weep, and God weeps ! Were it man that wept,
It were inhuman to drown sorrow's rheum
And turn a dry blank ball on misery.
Nay, ever so small a matter moves our pity.
A troubled eye, a tear in embryo


Not come to the birth, begets like tears in us,
And makes us travail with grief's heaviness,
Till down the shower comes. E'en yon amber star
Finds in the pearly drops of morn a couch
To lay its fainting head on—myriad tears
To weep its wane, and its fond semblance mirror
In their fair domes. But now our Morning-star
Looks down on us in very tearfulness,
And yet we will not weep—Heaven's Wanderer
Not on these hard hearts pillow, nor give back
In miniature His image. Sovereignly
Must He shine on us—in us, for for sin
We cannot weep, unless He weeps in us.

Thus was the sorrow of the Son of God
Perfect in nature ; therefore in essence fitted
Most for its high design. Next was His grief
Perfect, for limitless. It was infinite grief.
Oh, I have known a grief that had in it

A sumless sorrow ; I have known a tear
Silently stealing down a woman's cheek,
Out of the fountain of a child's eye dashing,
Or burning in the dry eye of a man,
That carried in it a whole world of woe ;
Nay more, that trespass'd on two worlds at once—
Held in its tiny globe all this earth's grief,
And threw its shadow over part of that
Or all—the world to come. But what was that
To His—the Man of Sorrows ? His, ' whose visage
Was so—so marrèd more than any man,
His form more than the sons of men ? ' What's
grief
To His ?

What is that trickling, bursting, burning drop,
Tho' it contain'd all this world and half that,
What's this to His—to one tear from His eye ?
His is the continent of infinite,
And in its sacred tabernacle holds

Just an infinitude of love and pity.
When Jeſus wept, 'twas God in man that wept.
It was the manifest discovery
To the broad eye of day and to all worlds,
To angels glistening with deep surprise
And admiration of such love's display—
It was the outward burst and cataract
Of pity burning in the bosom of God.
And in the orb of one such tear there was
A whole world's sufferance ; and as sin had gone
Out on God's fair creation, after it—
Nay, but preventing it, for it was ere
The world's foundation pre-ordain'd of God—
Went that one drop warm from the bosom of God
With Heaven's blessing fraught and high emprise.
So that where sin came, Sorrow was to meet it ;
When sin in its magicienry threw up
Its arc and circle to the height of Heaven,
Then did the arch of Sorrow compass it ;
When sin dived low to hide itself in hell,



Sorrow was underneath, and on her couch
Of gushing tears laid burning scarlet sin ;
When sin wax'd high, Sorrow was paramount ;
When sin, being sin against the Infinite,
Made itself infinite, then Sorrow's shroud
Was in the loom of the Eternal's counsels
Woven to wrap the infinite of sin
And clothe her to the feet. Thus His sorrow
To circumvent the infinite, not less
Was infinite : and what's infinity
Of good or bad but good or bad's perfection ?
It is a thread and essence of perfection,
On which the very being perfected
Poises its own existence.

Next was His sorrow
Perfect in 'tensity. His body wept ;
Wept, and not tears but blood. His very grief
Was envious of His after-sacrifice


And did forestall itself. Its 'tensity
Already offer'd up a sacrifice—
Its very tears drew blood. A sacrifice ?
No : in itself 'twere weak and powerless,
And for the great end ineffectual.
His grief must to the rack ! Ah Lord ! Thy tears,
Tho' they ran purple in Thine agony,
And every pore the swollen blood-drop bled,
Could not touch sin, nor quell its power to damn.
And yet one would have thought a tear of Jesus—
The Lord and Maker of the universe—
Had burnt the world up. By its gravity
And heavenly birth 'twould fall upon the heavens
And sweep them out of being as a scroll,
And through to the bosom of God : and naked
earth,
Unveil'd, uncurtain'd, untabernacled,
Would in the face of 'a consuming Fire'
Crackle as stubble. But ah ! Lord ! Thy grief
Must to the rack ! the rack ? must to the cross !

Thy grief must to the death ! Thy patient grief
Rack on the cross to death ! Infinite pain
And not to die, were worse than impotent ;
To die, and not the accursed death, were less
Than would suffice the infinite demand
Of God's firm justice 'gainst our mortal sin.
Therefore, dear Lord ! Thy tender boundless grief
Must rack on the cross to death ! Thy pure blood—
Thy life-blood—Thy heart's blood must ebb, dear
Lord !

Thy blood !—and if one tear of Thine wrought ruin
And strange confusion in this nether world,
What would one drop of Thine unsinning blood ?
One would have thought 't had petrified the world.
And on the instant orb on orb had hung
In agony, suspended in their course,
Dyed with the eternal spot, too foul for death,
To the eternal flames intangible,
Save to their exquisite and scathing torture ;
Fire and every instrument of God

Backward receding from the accursed contact :
And of annihilation hopeless left,
Seeing the eternal blood-mark had impress'd
On all a living, ever-living death,
Making one vast and instantaneous hell :
This for created matter and for man.
And for all else created 'bove the heavens
That on the face of God looks, not on earth ;
One would have thought it had confounded Heaven ;
Angels and thrones and principalities
And all created high intelligences,
Tho' they were steep'd in immortality,
Had blotted out of life ; and God alone
Rejoiced in His own Being.

Thus must His grief be rack'd, and every fibre
Of His soul's pureness drawn out to the full
Beneath the pressure of a whole world's sin,
Bared to the sword of justice bathed in heaven
Fresh from the armoury of God ; while He



Who whets the glittering blade and points its fall
Upon the silent sacrifice, withdraws
And backward turns from His forsaken Son.

Since then His sorrow was in nature perfect,
Perfect for sinless ; since in boundlessness
Perfect as infinite ; since in 'tensity
Perfect, for infinite in suffering ;
Therefore it was in efficacy perfect.
First in its essence was there fitness for
The work it had to do ; pureness there was,
And that the infinite purity of God.
Next, was the reach and compass of all sin.
But these, infinite purity and grief
Tho' infinite, could not the hell of sin
Curb tho' they compass'd ; therefore must they
 put on
Infinite suffering to meet the curse
Of infinite sin. These goodly twain

Must clothe themselves in their co-infinite—
Must dye themselves in infinite suffering
To obtain the power to cure. The tear-drop
Must where sin reaches roll its glassy globe
To sin impregnable ; within itself
Have waters infinite in purity ;
Then must it redden with God's own life-blood,
Made possible by God assuming flesh,
Bone of our bone and nature like to ours,
And in that nature dying. Then would it be
Capable of the end.

The fount pure,
It had the very nature in itself
To cleanse from sin ; and when it dyed itself
In its own purity, and sinlessness
Itself ran blood, and its divinity
Spake from the ground, it took the power to cleanse
And being all-diffusive, having power,
Why, it could cleanse from all.

Having the will,
That which was limitless, endued with power,
Could know no bounds to its embraciveness.
'Twas sinlessness that fitted for the work
And said, I've power within to make thee clean ;
Intensity prevail'd to use that power :
So sinlessness put on her scarlet robe
And dyed in crimson ; spotless purity
First crimson'd in its own life-giving stream
Could meet sin's crimson torrent on its own ground
With an unflooded power to say, 'Thy sins,
Be they as scarlet, shall be white as snow,
Or crimson, white as wool.'

IV.

PERFECT IN EFFICACY.

THUS had Christ's purpling sorrow power to sweep
Sin out of being—to obliterate
Sin from the records of Eternal Justice—
Sin from the heart of man exterminate
And from the presence of God's fair creation.

And sin to conquer was to conquer Death,
Bind Hell, and open Heaven.

That day—tho' there day never, ever midnight

Does on the separate ear of palsied spirits
The death-bell toll throughout the vault of hell;
That day—for not as yet their final doom
Hath in its dungeon seal'd the fallen hosts
(Reservèd they in everlasting chains
Under Tartarean darkness to 'that day;'
Yet are they free to infest this upper world
And overlay men's souls with tangling webs,
Foul subtle poisons from the womb of hell
And all the unfathomable pharmacy
That the rack'd brain of Satan from hell's caldron
Calls up at will, of infused damnèd spirit,
To drug men's souls, stifle their consciences,
And drag them down from this ambrosial air
And in that airless dome incarcerate)
Permitted yet to move invisible
In serried phalanx to their captain's word,
And circumvent (such is their number, power,
And subtlety) the separate heart of all
That draw this vital air, which yet to them

Is sulphurous fire and hell out of hell—
That day on his pale charger rode forth Death ;
And all the invisible world of spirits follow'd
Till hell was empty or to earth removed.

Peerless alike in hate and majesty
Came Satan foremost of the accursed crew.
But he his countless legions cares not for ;
Armies and hosts—companions of his fall—
Compatriots once in Heaven—he thinks not of.
One thought—one hope alone stifled all sense
Of past, or future, or things visible ;
One thought—one hope alone that hopeless bosom—
Bosom ?—that void of heaven—that vault of hell
Fill'd to the topmost ; not the thought to gain
Respite from doom, but the last hope to lay
Prostrate with him in death the Son of God ;
And thus revenge himself on God, and hope
Cut off from hated man. Such was his hope :
And if the flames of hell have power to light

And render visible its triple blackness,
Methought that as he scann'd his herald Death,
Beneath the weld impassible of hell
Upon that brow once mirroring all heaven,
That visage once for grace incomparable,
The flush of hope lit up his fell despair.

That day on his pale charger rode forth Death ;
And to his hollow tramp the frozen globe
Give back the hollow tramp ; while the unseen
world
Throughout the length and breadth of this our orb
Mantled behind him in thick chilling mists,
Foul pestilential fogs and blasting vapours,
Hiding the sun out for their multitude.

That was a day to be of Hell remember'd
When Death and Satan, Death's stern counterpart
(For they are one in mind and lineament,
Only in this is substance, of their nature,

In that corruption—empty hollowness ;
Or, as I thought, fill'd up of thews and sinews
To wield with power irresistible
A giant dart, within whose solid steel
Trickles the deadly current—liquid death ;
Whose touch corruption is and rottenness :
Livid his face ; and yet so ghastly—pale
As dimly show'd legions of flocking spirits
Leagues backward, downward, and on either
side

Of hell's impenetrable unbroken blackness),
These then advanced in foul conspiracy
And leagued for endless life or endless death,
If yet uncertain which ; while in each breast
Was hidden mutual hate—invincible dread,
Death being robb'd of his repose, and subject
By the foul contact to the lake of fire ;
He dreading death and equal doom with him
Who'd been his menial to do him service ;
This being hell to that ; that death to this :

But now no breath of hate or jealousy
Stirs that wan sea of veil'd complacency.

Forth issued they. But when hell's jaws were
gain'd
Invisible was Satan : he at will
In subterranean darkness clad was hid ;
And Death alone on his pale horse was seen.

Never rode Death forth with such majesty,
Never rode Death forth with such certainty,
Rode never Death forth half so easily
As then he rode to certain victory.
That was the top and pinnacle of glory—
To dare the SON OF GOD to mortal combat,
And front to front hold deadly tournament.

And how, that day, comes forth the Son of God ?
Girt with His sword upon His thigh comes He,
Girt with His glory and His majesty ?

Comes He most mighty, riding prosperously ?
Comes He on his white horse, crown'd with his bow
Whose span is as the lunar arc of heaven,
Whose arrows deadliest fly and in the heart
Of the King's enemies tell their agony ?
Comes He forth terrible in majesty ?

And comes He gloriously apparellèd,
And travelling in the greatness of His strength ?
And has He on a vesture dipt in blood ?
And follow Him the armaments of Heaven
On horses white and clad in white array,
Not to support, but hail Death's overthrow,
For He the wine-press of God's wrath, alone,
Shall tread, and none be with Him—none to help,
But His own arm—His fury shall uphold Him ?
And hath He on His vesture and His thigh
The name which no man knows, and legible
The writing—' King of kings and Lord of lords ?'
Yes, comes He forth on His white horse to war

And deadliest encounter with pale Death ?
Were His eyes flames of fire, and His head
Crownèd with many crowns, and from His mouth
Went forth the sharp two-edgèd sword that severs
Even the soul and spirit, joints and marrow,
Piercing the very thoughts and to the day
Scattering their several cells and properties ;
And that will pierce in twain the spirit of Death
Tho' it were hemm'd in by a thousand lives—
More than the driven snow for multitude,
And every life to lose an hundred gave ?
Tho' Death were multitudinous as snow
And free as it to course these hollow heavens ;
And could it gather up its separate lives
And in one flake—the least—the smallest hide,
Were it a morsel small as a pin's head,
Too subtle for the full-eyed microscope,
Yet shall that blade divide the water-drop
And drain the world of death : or if all hell
Were solid, as it now is liquid fire ;

If hell were adamant, and death in the centre,
Yet shall that sword spilt thro' to the very core
And drink death's imperceptible marrow up.

Comes the white horse and He who sat thereon,
As comes all-conquering day to swallow up
The faint and colourless night—comes He to meet
The pale horse and his rider, whom to unseat
Can none in earth or Heaven save He alone?
All-conquering and to conquer comes He forth?

Thrice saw I Him on bended knee; 'twas thrice
Low on His face I saw Him prostrate fall;
Thrice moved His lips in prayer, and as I saw
Where knelt He all ensanguined was the ground;
His garments cast aside, His body show'd
To sweat great drops of blood, and from His brow
That chill night flow'd the ruby torrent down;
But ere long Heaven's messenger stood by
To strengthen Him in His death's agony.

'Tis past. I wondering ask'd, ' And was it fear
And dread of the encounter ?' 'Twas replied,
' Such to Eternal Life is thought of death ;
Such motionless cold death to the apprehension
Of the Ever-living and Life-giving One ;
Such is the sting of death—the poison—sin,
That its bare neighbourhood were weight to bear
Heavier than worlds on worlds, and whose approach
The human soul of God's Eternal Son,
Tho' to its contact all impregnable,
Faints to support.'

Then up He rose. His wont was on His brow
The calm—the meek—the heavenly—the Divine !
His mien was that of erst—of yesterday,
As still—as peaceful. All unarm'd He came
And onward drew to meet the deadly foe.

Then Death was vex'd to see Him unequipp'd
And come to meet him in His common guise,

When he had thought to gain him such renown
By fighting—in the open of all heaven,
Before the many legion'd eyes of hell,
This earth the battle scene—the SON OF GOD.

Quick as the lightning-flash, from Satan's side,
Where stands he as out-posted sentinel,
Flew to his counsel one of demon mould ;
For size—as when the cumbering massive clouds
Pile Atlas upon Atlas in the heavens ;
But misproportion'd most of all hell's crew :
His head was full of eyes, unless 'twas one
Stole round that huge mass in perpetual orbit
And lighted up unwaning luminaries
That watch'd on every side, while this in the
centre
Moved stealthily, but pass'd and gleam'd as light-
ning ;
Suspicious e'en of his own instruments.
His body—none, or but an infant's waist.

Endued he was with power to gather up
His giant legs and arms, and in full flight
Quicker than sight, and thought out-distancing,
Thro' key-holes pass and hairbreadth crevices,
And momentarily play his roundelay
Thro' labyrinths of palaces, or towns,
Thro' cottage chinks and every haunt of man ;
While ever and anon he sits and broods
In cottages, proud halls, and turret chambers,
And like a pyramid of dark cloud rises,
Filling men's minds with gloom they know not
why ;
Then out again to play his fiendish rounds.
He at the instant to Death's side drew near.

Still'd is the icy tramp and Death dismounts.
Perchance he fear'd some secret strategy
Whereby in garb of peace the Man of Sorrows
Would gain Him honour by his overthrow
And irretrievable discomfiture.

Then from hell's blackest centre summons he
The blackest fiend in hell ; or if there be
Abyss still lower in the bottomless pit
Where flows the scum of hell—where molten dark-
ness
Fills up the channels of conception—
The fissures of all breath and thought and space,
Thence summons he that triple-dyed fiend,
Whose veins, if veins, run pitch blasted so cold
That not the fire of hell can make it hot.
He to their counsel came in human guise :
Nor lack'd they instantaneous device.

I saw the traitor-kiss. I mark'd the stamp
That under guise of friendship stole His sweets :
That outward went upon that spotless flesh
With poisonous breath and lips of deadly venom ;
Breath—than hell fouler that it breathed fair,
Lips—with hell purple that they loving are,
And left the slime and spawn of adders' poison

Upon the taintless cheek. So have I seen
A serpent winding round a woman's bosom,
A worm upon the white cheek of a rose
Or else with poisonous tooth the pitiless East
On the fair bloom begin its carnival.
I mark'd the passage of that serpent-kiss
Whose death-fang, seeming sweet, tasted His blood
And sent the curdling poison to the core :
Disguised—Death's lips they were—Death's kiss—
Death's seal,
Tho' than a thousand deaths more horrible.

But HE nor moves—nor stirs—nor wards the
kiss,
Tho' well He knew its foul-mouth'd treachery ;
But sufferance grants to that hell-born approach
Of the dark fiend and patent apostate,
Now Death's and Satan's own ambassador.

HE unaffected waits. Not so all Heaven :

The curtain of the black and angry sky,
Rent by the dread suspense, shows in long vista
Legions of angels waiting but His word
Satan and Death and the accursed crew
By His almighty power downward to drive
And helpless hold in adamantine chains.
But He wills not : and the black vault of night
And double darkness closes o'er again.

HE unaffected waits : then onward drew.
Why come they not to take their willing captive—
Why come they not to seize their harmless victim—
Why come they not to meet their votary
Self-left—self-sacrificed ? Death ! art another
Than thou wast ever ? art thou mealy-mouth'd ?
Art pitiful and do thy bowels yearn ?
Art sick and hast thou lost thine appetite,
That thou'lt not fill thy insatiable maw
Whose wont it ever was to cry ' Give—give ?'
Hell ! art thou chang'd and all the fiends asleep ?

Why come they not ! As He advanced a pace,
At sight of His all-spotless majesty,
Or rather at the silver of His voice,
Whate'er there was—whether of earth or hell,
Human or demon—living, to the ground
In hopeless trance it fell o'erpower'd, and there
For ever had remain'd, had not that voice
Call'd them to wake from their fast sepulture :
Then gave Himself to thy embrace, cold Death !

'Twas morning—and the cock his clarion blew
Thrice, all unwotting of the unchannell'd tide ;
Unconscious that the bright and virgin day
Would fall ere night from its propriety,
Would lie at noon upon its bridal bier,
And he'd to roost, beneath the sable cloak
Of darkness such as never earth had felt.

There were, tho' men, that wept, and women's
 hearts

Fainted for sorrow, yet outwatch'd their grief—
A few among a thousand : like they were
The gleaming grapes in vintage after-hours,
Or as the shaking of an olive-tree,
Just two or three upon the topmost bough—
Some four or five upon the outmost branch—
As one among a million. All the world
Arrayèd were in deadliest mockery—
Had stoled themselves in deep-dyed blasphemy,
That blacker shone against the quivering sun
For their ill scarlet trappings of foul mirth
And ill-according glare of merriment.

'Tis noon ; but noon is night—nay, than night
darker—

Other than had the sun gone down at noon—
Other than had earth's lights forsaken this
To hang their lamps in the other hemisphere ;
And other is it than the opaque of hell,
That region where light never comes, but fire

Makes 'darkness visible.' Never night like that :
The sun is black at its meridian—
The moon and stars are not—earth's lights are out.
If men's hearts fail not—faint not—iron are,
Then the inanimate shall cry them shame ;
If men's hearts melt not, these more tender are,—
More truthful to the magnet of High Heaven.
Sun, moon, and stars, and if there be separate light,
Have shrunk from earth and gone to bow them-
selves

In lowliest adoration and dread fear
Before His footstool Who first gave them light—
They go to pale their fires before His throne
Who lives in light ineffable, and pour
Their ebbing gleams into that sea of glory—
Only that they mayn't witness earth's death-scene.

The day hath on its double coat of mail
And mounteth guard against the robber night ;
The midday sun has toll'd its midnight bell

And to all worlds has struck the funeral knell ;
The hollow moon knolls out the iron clang ;
And every star within the palsied heavens
Rings out the solemn dirge and slow death-note—
Doth on its brazen plate and blacken'd boss
Tinkle 'dead,' 'dead,' along the firmament.

Suck—suck—suck—Death like a vampire sits,
And flaps his sable wings and fans the darkness ;
And sucks — sucks — sucks — sucketh the heart's
warm blood.

'Tis One—and Death still like a vampire sits.

It seems the slow and leaden-paced hours
So weighted are on their particular
And year-divided moments that their time
Will never count its sum ; rather it is
That as the day has put on lasting night,
So time is not but is eternity—

No pendulum to count past, present, future—
One strange—unchanging—motionless—still now :
Or should day ever from its dungeon break,
'Twould, with its inhuman face and locks of snow,
Being whole centuries immured in darkness,
Affright itself from its propriety,
And time would come to an untimely birth.

'Tis Two—and sucketh he the heart's best blood.

The drowsy moments rust upon the hinge
And for a click each counts a century :
'Twill never—never pass ; time's on its bier
Nor to the widow'd day can lift its eye.
No—there's a stir—a move—a flutter—list !
Night noddeth unto night and waves her plumes.

'Tis Three—and Death flappeth his quicken'd
pinions
And draws the last drop of the heart's life-blood—

'Tis finished'—and the silver of His voice
Who gives His heart's-blood to the Demon Death
And layeth down His life in his foul jaws
Tells to the blacken'd world His day is done.

But nature can no more sustain herself—
Reeleth this round earth like a drunken man,
And rock the heavens as they would topple down.
Split, rocks! and sever, mountains! Let your
chasms

A channel give for the key-note to pass!
And rend, thou temple-veil! dispart in twain!
Part and let thro' that voice still holier!
And cleave, ye heavens! at its silver chord
And let it thro' to the Eternal Bosom!
Sever! and let light in upon the deed
And full accomplishment! Hold not back your
blaze,

But let it burn on the red hand of earth;
And all your dread artillery discharge

Upon this blasted world ! Awake, ye Dead !
Rive your graves open and untenant death !
And, Hell ! say thou, has it pass'd thro' thy
bars—

Hast riven thee in sunder as a toy,
And with its molten silver quench'd thy fire
And put it out—or art thou still hell—hell ?

Three days and nights, o'ercome with the exploit
And gorged and glutted to the full with triumph
And his dread work who quaffs the cup of life,
Three days and nights slept Death ; and Satan
watch'd.

Beneath his cold embrace lies this world's Hope :
His body hath its marble sepulchre,
' Marble to marble ' seemeth it to say,
Hewn of the virgin rock, where none had lain,
A tomb new chisell'd, rare ; its marble door

Is held securely by a massive stone,
The which fast sealèd was with Satan's signet :
And thus He sleeps the marble sleep of death.

Night followeth day ; day night ; and night again
Casteth her mantle o'er the silent tomb,
Nor yet her shroud had lifted from the earth ;
When thro' the still'd and slumbering universe
Is heard—is felt the universal crash,
And the rent sides of this our goodly vessel
That rideth on the glassy sea of heaven
So nobly on her course—her bulwarks split,
And seams agape—were like to let her down
And founder with her freight : this earthen vessel
Crack'd to the centre—as its doom were come
To shiver into fragments and return
Into its sea of separate particles,
And not a shard be left to say 'twas earth :
When He who thus had lain three days and nights
Beneath the cumbering embrace of Death

(Not seeming death, but real—the hideous weight
And iron grasp of ‘cold obstruction’)
When He who seem’d to be of death ingulf’d,
He at His will forth rises from the tomb
And throws the hateful monster off—

More easily than when at midnight rose
The giant in his strength, and took away
The city gates as they’d been aspen leaves,
And the two posts, upwrench’d with either
hand,
And bare them bar and all, with easy step
Up to the mountain top, and left them there
To make the wild winds sport and merriment :
More easily than at the dawn of day
With raised and snowy arm the maiden doth
Throw back the light and silken coverlet :
Or softly—gently—as at peep of day
On its young mother’s fasten’d—anchor’d eye
Lifts up its fringed lid the new-born babe :

So softly raised He death's coverlid.
So gently put He off the cloak of death,
So easily moved He the marble weight
And ponderous bulk of motionless obstruction,
Which not all worlds—all power in earth or
 heaven
Could else prevail to wield—to move—to stir :
So easily went He, the LORD OF LIFE,
Away with Death, and left its hated self
To the wild sport of the eternal fires.

HE rose—for, Death ! 'twas an impossible thing
That thou shouldst feed and fill thy carrion self
On His sweet flesh that never tasted sin.
There was the bar the which thou couldst not
break

Tho' thou canst eat thro' iron, adamant
Dissolve with thy foul juices, spirit gnaw,
And with thy viewless fangs the winds impregnate
To do thy pestilential behests,
Till they, that now such wide-spread empire hold
And solid individual potency,

Catch fire from thy red-hot sulphurous breath,
And, terror-stricken, in their madden'd flight
Kindle the earth's foundations, melt the mountains,
And lash to wreathing fire the boiling seas ;
Scorch up the heavens, dissolve the elements,
And this wide world and all its works burn up ;
And then sink down a flat and corseless thing,
Upon the charr'd and beingless universe,
And thou'lt, Death ! to thy home—the lake of fire.
Yes, on thy wide-spread table thou mayst bleach
The bones of universal man, and feast
Thy hollow eyes upon the carnival ;
Ay, on sound flesh, strong sinew, and firm thew
For every tick upon the clock mayst glut
Thy momentarily-whetted appetite,
Till that the clock of time shall cease to click
And thy last corse be served ; then mayst thou fall
On the inanimate, and fill thy maw
Upon the scatter'd dust of crumbling earth,
The last drop boil of the continuous ocean,

And take the heavens for thy honey-comb,
This mayst thou do—
But touch one hair of that unoffending flesh—
Never !

'Tis seal'd with an impossible !
Nay not with one, but three—the signet's triple,
While each one is enough to shut thee out.

Death ! look upon that white and spotless flesh
And there descry impossibility,
What ever brought all human flesh beside
Into thy loathsome hated charnel-house ?
Corruption ! wherefore must I call thee 'Father' ?
And the foul worm 'My mother and my sister' ?
Because sin let thee in to do thy work.
Ever since Adam fell, sin has free ingress
And thro' these gaping pores goes in and out
Girt with a thousand ills to do us mischief,
Giving thee empire over these poor bodies
That else had been to harm inviolate,

And had not sin betray'd, had cast thee off,
Death ! as a giant puts away a fly,
Or rather thou hadst never been—never
Hadst thou assail'd this goodly citadel ;
But now—we are thy prey.

But that pure flesh—
That whiteness—what hast thou to do with that ?

Have I not conquer'd it in open fight ?
Have I not drawn the last drop of its blood ?
Have I not laid it in my darksome vault ?

No, thou hast not, proud Death ! no power hadst
thou
To lift thy bony arm to do Him hurt,
Had He not given thee power and laid down life.
But grant that thou didst take away His life,
Yet since there was no cause but His own choice
His infinite life to give for a world's sin,
When He had died—when He had put His hand,

Cold Death ! in thine—thou hadst no power at all
To let thy legion'd emissaries forth
To mar that fragrant bloom. No consequence
Without a cause : Thou mar'st this motley flesh
Because it is impregnate with foul sin ;
But where sin never came, Death ! thou art foil'd.
That snowy flesh is barrier too great
For thee to mount, thou potent adversary !
Nay, not to conquer—thou are conquer'd by it !
Thou art caught in thine own snare—thou and Satan
Are in those silken foils entrammellèd,
And at the height and pinnacle of triumph
And by your own device are overthrown.
For had ye not assail'd the impossible,
The current of Death's stream, that aye has swept
In its black flood the stream of living men
And carried them with its resistless swoop
Down to the dark abyss, had ne'er been turn'd.
But when ye threw that blossom in the stream,
Death's bitter waters then were changed to sweet—

Death's sullen waters thence put on a smile—
Death's flowing waters then began to ebb—
Death's swallowing waters thence were swallow'd
up.

Death ! thou hast found in death thy Conqueror !
Grave ! by thy victory thou hast found thy Victor !
Thou canst not touch the blossom of His flesh,
Though there it lies—the inanimate still corse !
Death ! thou art vanquish'd in thine own domain !
And He who conquers Death, Death's prisoners
Frees at His sovereign will—captivity
Leads captive—and the death ye hoped for Him
Becomes your triple hell.

Then add to this the pass'd word of our God.
Death ! wilt thou climb this barrier ! 'Tis high ;
Thy scaling ladder place on hell's pavement
And its top rest against the firmament ;
And then thou shalt mount up the dizzy height
From hell to heaven through the thin empty air

And not a fear to cross thy steelèd brain—
This mayst thou do : it is thine own domain ;
'Tis given thee to do there at thy list.
But not a foot from earth there lieth marble
The which thou'lt never scale ; 'tis low—but all
Thine unrelenting efforts to reach that
Shall fruitless prove and mock thee in the attempt.
Wherefore ?
It lieth in the shrine of God's own word,
'Thou wilt not leave His soul in hell, nor suffer
Thine Holy One to see corruption.'
Hadst thou and Satan been forewarn'd, 'twere well :
Aforetime he assail'd God's living Son
And found the invisible bars of God's own word
Too strong for him, and baffled left the attempt.
And now what matters it that Son's a corse ?
The word immutable of God stands guard.
Thou canst not, Death !—but that word throws
thee back
And buries thee as deep as hell from heaven.

Nor think thee thou canst tear thy grating
ever,
And feast thine eyes on that thou canst not touch.
Count—count thy time and make the most of it ;
Three days and nights—this is the fullest sum
For Infinite Life to lie in finite death ;
Thence on the step—the moment—it must mount.
Not only must that white bloom never wither—
Not only must that pale flower never fade—
Not only must that blanch'd flesh never see
Corruption, but 't must put its glories on ;
It must the living hue—the natural purple—
The proper strength—the perfect man resume :
It cannot lie and let a wondering world
Do homage to its silent victory ;
But it must break the spell, dissolve the charm
And put its motionless mute slumber off.
Why? For there lies, within, the living spark—
The lambent flame—the holy residue—
The unquenchable fire of Divinity.

And it must up—'t must mount—'t must break the
crest

And overtowering fastness of the tomb,

And out upon its heavenly embassy.

Nay more, 'tis spirit now as well as flesh ;

The what was body, and what body seems

And is, is spirit. Death ! Grave ! thy victim

Must from thee take more than He laid thee down :

He must put on His spiritual manhood

Upon the face of His Divinity.

No more the sad—the soil'd—the suffering !

No more the root—the refuse ! The wan flower—

The tender plant puts on celestial grace—

Eternal verdure dons. Time ! Death ! Satan !

Ye thought to spoil that flower in its tomb,

And it a space did yield you its rare sweets ;

But it must rob you of eternity,

And leave your short-lived boast an endless hell

Wherein to vex itself.

Thou boaster, Death !

Thou canst not tussle with Divinity !
And know it is threefold ! what canst thou do ?
Tho' with thy hollow wand and fleshless finger
Thou mayest touch all living with corruption,
And shrivel up the heavens as a scroll,
Affect the elements with dissolution,
And the sound core of this our solid globe
Strike with disease and instant rottenness—
Against the triple armoury of Heaven
Thou'rt powerless : that pale and stricken corse
Is overlaid with Divinity !
And that threefold ! what canst thou do, poor
Death ?

The Eternal shields it with His own Godhead,
'Tis shielded by the Godhead of the Son,
'Tis shielded by the Godhead of the Spirit—
Let it alone : it is thy Conqueror ! Death,
Thou canst not tussle with Divinity !

And as thou canst not touch, so must it rise :

Divinity cannot entrancèd lie
O'erpower'd with the weight of cumbering flesh ;
But it must spread its wings and dove-like rise
All pure celestial fire, and with it change
This fretted work into celestial mould
Of spirit like itself—must thro' the wards
And dungeons of cold death on angel's wing
Herald eternal life—death's prisoners,
Were each one lockèd in his separate cell
Of thick-ribb'd ice or triple folds of brass,
Unloose—disseize thee of thine empire,
And send thee down thy meagre skeleton
To fatten, or be fed on, as 't may be,
Hell ! in thy feeding-grounds and pasturage—
The never-dying worm and quenchless fire.

HE rose—

To die and raise Himself—this argued Him
The Lord of life and death—Eternal God.

To die and be raised up by God the Father,
Proved Him to be the Son of God, and God.
For never did nor can the God of Truth
Belie the truth and ratify imposture :
And since Christ said He was the Son of God
And God, were it not true, then had He lain
Till doomsday 'neath the weight of ponderous death
And that o'erlying lie : but to be raised
Argued Him what He was—God's equal self,
Declared to be the Son of God with power
By His recovery and rise from death.
To die and quicken'd of the Spirit be,
Proves to all worlds our great God's unity ;
Tho' three in person they are ' Gods ' but one :
Therefore in all their acts and offices
(Tho' each His share and separate assignment
Hath in Redemption's great and glorious plan,
Distinct, apart, and intransferable)
That which One doeth that do all the Three
By unity of will if not of action,

By unity of principle if not person,
By the One God being in all the Three.
Therefore the Father raises up the Son ;
Therefore the Son by His own power rose ;
Therefore it was by the Eternal Spirit
He offer'd was to death and rose again.

HE rose—and thus He threw, Death ! thy
coils off.

He rose, because it was not possible
He should be held of death, being Divine.
But in His rise and triumph over death
I do behold a threefold cord of love,
So firmly woven that no power can break,
Whereon suspended is His people's hope.

Not for Himself but man He died ; for man
He rose from death—He rose our Surety.
Christ gave to Death power against Himself

As Surety, laden with a whole world's sin ;
But when He took His life up from the grave
He did redeem His Suretyship from death
By the full price paid down in sumless value—
Infinite spotless life—pure Divine blood !
He thro' the grave and gate of death had borne
Man's life bound in His own—dipp'd in His blood ;
And now He bears aloft man's ransom'd life
And challenges all foes to pluck it thence.

Death ! at thy feet He throws the gauntlet down.
Go, take it up, proud Death ! Thou canst not :
thou

A very meagre ghost and skeleton
Death ! art thou of thyself, slain spiritless Death !
And tho' thy putrid corse must touch all living,
Thou canst affect only the outer casket,
Thou canst not touch the gem : and soon the
shrine

Shall wing its angel way from thy foul jaws.



Satan ! before the face of day, of hell,
Of Heaven, the gauntlet lies ; go, take it up !
Thou canst not : thou hast lost thy last lone hope :
The thunderbolt, wherewith thine arm was arm'd
To doom all living to the house of death
And deluge life in living nothingness,
Has fallen powerless—spent—swallow'd up
On yonder Rock, and thine unsinew'd arm
Falls helpless at thy side.

Nor longer does Eternal Justice claim
Necessity to take the gauntlet up.
But satisfied with infinite life laid down
To infinite due, she smiles to leave it there.
To rise was proof and palpable evidence
The debt was paid, the Law's exact demand
Met to the letter, and an angry Heaven
Was white again with peace.

Moreo'er He rose the Head of His redeemed :

Nor would He leave His spiritual body
Subject to Death's inveterate hate and thralldom.
He could not—'tis against all principle ;
He could not rise omnipotent o'er Death
And leave His body in the jaws of hell :
Just as He took His natural body from
The grave and gate of Death, so must He take
His spiritual body up ransom'd with Him,
That body being all His ransom'd Church.
They rose by virtue of His rise from death ;
Then—at the instant—in the eyes of Him
To whom one day is as a thousand years,
A thousand years one day.
Not instantly but in appointed course
To them, as each is buried in Christ's death
And rises in His life, by the same power
And Spirit whereby He rose Himself from death.
And simultaneous, when the archangel's trump
Breaks thro' all tombs, and the unburthen'd
body

Mounts to the presence of its Lord and God
And union with its several waiting spirit,
Imagèd like to His.

HE rose to prove His Suretyship was sure—
Unscathed the Surety, so unscathed were they
For whom He gave Himself as Surety.
He rose, and the eternal Heavens bowed down
While He our Head and Representative,
Enter'd within the everlasting gates ;
He rose to plead the death that He had borne,
He rose to give the life that He had won.

HE rose alone. The soul may be in bliss—
The spirit bathe in Heaven's fountain'd joy,
But not one body of the whole redeemed
As yet has burst death's coil and enter'd Heaven.
For they, the twain precursors of His flight
And heavenward ascent—the one who ' was not '
Translated by the Great Invisible,

And he—the prophet in his car of flame,
Rapt in a whirlwind to his native skies—
Saw never death, unrobed of these poor bodies
(For flesh and blood can never enter Heaven)
Changed on the instant, yet not knowing death,
As they shall changed be who stand on earth,
When in like manner as He went to Heaven
Cometh the Lord upon His chariot-clouds.
But tho' alone, He rose as the *First-fruits*
And earnest of His people's after-rise.
That word hath in it very *certainty*—
As certainly as follows harvest on
The heels of the first waved and yellow sheaf,
So shall His people follow on His steps,
A while between, but yet as certainly :
O'erflowing plenty—just as the first sheaf
Doth herald in the full and laden harvest,
So at the waving of these first ripe fruits
Waves the white earth her golden-eared sides ;
The handful is precursor of a crop

The fruits whereof shall shake as Lebanon ;
All heaven makes room to take the harvest in :
And *Likeness* hath—just as the yellow sheaf
Wears on its face the form and counterpart
Of the incoming and impatient harvest,
So shall we be like Him ; in form—in mind—
In lineament ; the sons of earth shall be
Like to the Son of God.

HE died—and tasted death for every man :
This their condemnation who reject His love
And put salvation from them—justly left
To bear for ever not Death's yoke alone,
But that insufferable dye of death
Which, not to wash the soul, brands it for aye—
The cumbering death of God's Incarnate Son.
HE rose—and thus to all His saints thou, Death !
A shadow art, tho' thou be triply black
And lengthen'd out into immensity !
Tho' thou mayst stalk before us, and all light

Hide by thy monster shape and pinions out
(And I would not thy terror controvert
Nor impugn lightly thy dread majesty)
Yet thou a shadow art, and faith's eye pierces
Thy triple blackness thro', and thro' thy waist
Scans Heaven's light, and thee a ghost of fear.
Thy waters, tho' they were as black as ink,
Or tho' they ran thick gore, and were a flood
As broad as the Atlantic, to faith's eye
Transparent are, nor sever us as much
From the Eternal Presence, as the glass
Cuts off the outer light.

Thus do we see
Out of the ocean of His sorrow flow
Four streams of joy. The one is for Himself;
Three for His people flow. The one, no stream
But sorrow's once it now joy's ocean is—
Joy's ocean in the bosom of His love—
Joy mirroring all His love, and sorrow drowning :
This hath He for Himself—grief's recompense.

Those for His people flow ; so strong—so full—
They tide them past all doubt, all fear, all death,
And land them safe in the Eternal Haven.

HIS sorrow bounded Hell,
Else had it known no bounds—interminable
To swallow up in its abyss of fire
The entire race of man not missing one.
But round Hell's boundless space, and out of Hell's
Duration infinite, has Infinite Grief
Laid its soft girding bands and pluck'd from thence
With an Almighty hand—yet tender—pierced—
The multitude that no man numbers, saved
Eternal torment. His grief, so to speak,
Has undergirded Hell, and pluck'd from thence
Brands for the burning manifold, and left
Hell's crackling orb with its foul freight to sink
Into illimitable space from God—

Of God the void (save that the Almighty's breath
Doth like a stream of brimstone kindle it,
Else void of God). Hell is balk'd of its prey
And all the fiends are mad.

HIS sorrow open'd Heaven.

Across the deep abyss from Hell to Heaven
(Hell being the desèrt of sin and doom)
Has flung, of solid rock, the wondrous arch
Whose lowest base not on eternal truth,
Not on eternal power rests alone,
But on the Himself Eternal. He the Rock,
Below the lowest depths of Hell descending,
Above the highest heights of Heaven rising,
In Zion laid for a foundation-stone :
Whereon to stand, as soon might Heaven collapse,
Or falter the Eternal attributes,
As that Rock fail the foot that stands thereon


Poor mariner ! on life's false ocean sailing
And haply wondering at its sunniness,
Know, thou art shipwreck'd ! for thy bark within
Is rotten at the core ; and when the tinsel
That overlayeth it in mockery
By the first breath of wind is blown aside,
Thou'lt to the bottom. But now while yet this
Rock—

This only Rock is rear'd for thee—for all,
And spans for thee—for all—its solid haven,
Mariner ! mariner ! I would bid thee 'scape—
'Scape for thy life, or thou art lost for ever !
And not to lie, like lead, in the deep waters,
Nay, not to struggle with eternal waves,
But having sensible life in double death
Ever to buffet with unquenchable fire !

Thou solid Rock !
First stepping-stone between yon Heaven and
Earth !

Cast in the angry and infuriate ocean
Of boiling sin wreathing to Heaven's topmost,
Making at once all calm—a shining river—
Waters that carry Heaven in their eye,
Bidding the desert earth to bud and blossom,
Thou art so wondrous as I gaze on thee
Being all glorious sheen yet solid Rock,
That mine eye faileth for thy measurement !

Yet is this arch that spans the infinite
'Tween Heaven and Hell invisible, save when
The Eternal Spirit lifts the cumbering veil
From off the natural heart and pours in light,
And to the eye of faith makes manifest
In its dimensions and solidity,
In its perfection of strength, grace, beauty,
The ROCK OF AGES ; round whose lowest base
Fret there in vain the everlasting fires ;
Whose every height is bulwark upon bulwark,
Insuring perfect safety—full repose ;




Whose top-stone touches not these outer heavens
But bade the inner Heaven of heavens descend
And fling its portals open to receive
Death's Conqueror and Hell's—the KING OF KINGS.

V.

PERFECT IN AGENCY.

BUT while I scann'd the breadth, the length, the
depth,
The height of Christ's all-sorrowing—suffering love,
All-virtuous to annihilate all sin,
All-powerful to conquer Death and Satan,
All-infinite to reach the core of Hell
And span alike the highest arch of Heaven,
Mine eye did light upon a darksome dungeon,
So barr'd and bolted from the light of day,
Full with all foulness, thick with miry clay,
Its plight so pitiful, so drear, so dread;



Mine eye soon lay upon a fountain-bed
Of welling tears, to think 'this spot alone
His sorrow can reach never !'


And like it
Are many as the stars for multitude,
And countless as the sands of the sea-shore,
All dread—all drear—all dank—all dark—all dead !
This earth of ours must to the eye of Heaven
Be black with these foul spots—these prison-holds
To light impenetrable ! Unlike the heavens,
Whose stars shine white upon their azure ground,
This earth is white, her stars are black as night.

But soon a sunbeam glanced athwart my brow,
And Heaven's handkerchief did sweep aside
This rising—gathering—earth-sprung—troubled
tide.

'Is not His sorrow perfect ?' At the thought
That many-legion'd monster, Doubt, did fly
And to a neighbouring brake so quickly hie

(All thorns it was, all brambles, and all slough),
 That in his ruthless haste he was sore worsted ;
 But being self-possessed and full of guile
 He made no moan, but there ashamed did lie :
 Or, as I thought, that many-leagued giant,
 Who holds all eyes—all hearts aghast for fear,
 Disparted as a thin and summer mist,
 As we may sometime read in fabled story,
 And at the instant we most frightened were,
 Was not, but in his lieu the sunny air.

So was it when the beaming thought did come
 ‘Is not His sorrow perfect ?’ And if perfect
 Then must it have fit convoy for perfection ;
 And He who walks upon the wingèd wind
 And makes the clouds His chariot—He who bids
 Creation do His will and high behest
 To carry His eternal power and Godhead
 Forth to the blaze of day, shall never want
 Fit conduct for His greater work—to save.



The finite may suffice for that ; for this
Not less than infinite. The precious gem
Cannot entrusted be to Nature's hands,
Cannot confided be—not to all worlds,
But hidden lieth in a living casket—
His sovereign Hand who 'garnishèd the heavens,'
Who moved upon the surface of the waters,
And out of chaos made this perfect order—
'T must have no Hand but His.

Infinite Sorrow

Will only delegate to Infinite—
The pearl that beggar'd Heaven to make earth
rich ;
And to its Equal giveth the commission
'Go take this gem and lay it to that heart.'



O ! thou art very wonderful, Perfection !
To gather thee in the minutest blade,
The silken flower, or the silvery shell,
The tiniest insect, or the water-drop,

Art rapturous ! But to unfold the leaf—
The broad — the opening — widening — endless
leaf

Of God's high work to save His creature man—
Thou art so exquisite, as all sense to drown,
And our o'ercharged susceptibilities
O'erfraught—o'erflooded, thence asleep to lay
On wonder's golden-fringed curtain'd pillow ?

Perfect His sorrow was to suffer ; so
Perfect His sorrow was to act, not suffer.
And here I do behold threefold perfection.
'Tis perfect to procure, and to prevent,
And perfect is it in the sovereign mean
Itself procures. O say not it is hard,
And that forsooth he speaketh parables,
But follow me and I will show thee all.

First, is it perfect to procure the means
By which to gain the end of so much sorrow.



What is it that has purchased Heaven for man ?
That gushing — flowing — trickling — stealing —
ebbing

Red, crimson tide—Thy blood ! Emmanuel !
And Thy blood is the purchase of the Spirit.
O ! never could the Spirit have been gotten
Out of Heaven down to this sinning earth
But on that sacrifice—that bleeding Lamb !
But when the reeking earth drank in His
blood,

Achieving earth's atonement once for all,
Then Heaven's portals on their golden hinges
Moved to the breath of that all-fragrant incense ;
And just within the veil the Almighty Spirit
(The ever-willing but till then debarr'd—
Debarred only by His own perfections)
Stood waiting—hovering on His dove-like wings
For the Divine command—the Son's ascent—
The moment when in the eternal counsels
With no less Power Divine than Theirs, so too

In unison with Their will, He should descend
Not of Himself to speak, but magnify
And glorify the work of Christ to men.

And to obtain the dower of the Spirit,
Was to obtain in Him all other gifts ;
All comprehended are in that one word ;
The treasures of life, of joy, of Heaven,
The sumless bounties of 'the King of kings !'

And He the golden key is to unlock
That darksome dungeon, which to see mine eye
'Gan fill with tears of very misery :
That dungeon is each several human heart.
For it were vain to bind the jaws of Hell,
And vain to open wide the gates of Heaven,
And leave men gazing on the one or other
As senseless as the fool or maniac ;
Therefore must fall His sorrow on the heart
And melt it into love.

But this same heart
Is cased about with stone and adamant—
Nay, is it stone and adamant itself :
And barr'd it is and bolted, fastly lock'd,
Securely seal'd by all the art of man
And all the art of man's high enemy,
Whose highest care is to secure the heart.

Some bolts are at the outwork, some within.
Outmost are two. The one so welded is
And with the adamantine mass incorporate,
That not an angel's glance could e'er discern
Where ended this or that began ; 'twas black
As midnight, and more edged with darkness grew
And subtiler from bearing back the light.

Its fellow was more obvious to discern,
But huge as that and to all force unwieldy.
Incrusted was it on the natural bed
And layer whereon 'twas fix'd and rusted in

By age immoveable ; the ponderous mass
Could never turn upon its bolted hinge,
Because the secret and self-moving spring,
And erst designed by the Artificer
To give it instant—constant motion, was not.

Within, a very palace 'twas for bolts
And armoury complete ; both for defence
And to assail, at will : for there each bolt
And bar and lock was oil'd for instant use
To draw—to close—to lift—to fall—to unlock,
But all were kept fast shut for fear of ingress
And entrance of the light ; and at each bolt,
As guard, a spirit stood to do her bidding
Who empress lay, couch'd on a bed of scarlet.
And near her did I see a furnace broad
And white with heat, wherein she plunged her darts
And many-fashion'd demon-moulded missiles,
All shapes, all sizes, arrowy, fangèd, blunt ;
And drew them out red-hot to do her work—

To scar the light, to sear the conscience,
The thought of good impale at its conception,
The heart impregnate with hot lust—foul passion,
Making it on her anvil malleable
Therein the furthest ends of ill to compass.

Two passages there are from this domain.
One ever, day and night, wide open lies ;
Downward it wends descending into darkness ;
A broad and beaten way to his fell regions
Who reigns as Prince of this world, but who holds,
Beneath, his empire. This unguarded is ;
What need to guard the way of sworn allies ?
By it in quick succession thoughts descend
And rise fresh-temper'd 'gainst the upper light,
Fresh-forged all thought of evil to forecast,
All thought of good forefend ; and through it flock
Up from the baneful pit, their black abode,
Unnumber'd evil spirits—hateful harpies
Who brood upon the heart—make it the nest

Of unclean birds and of all filthiness,
Waiting the time itself shall be their prey.
This Satan makes his favourite seat, and here
With little less than proud ubiquity
Over all evil (such his permitted power)
All hearts at once possessing, or at will
Leaving in charge of legion'd emissaries,
Stands, as that never-glutted bird of prey
The vitals gorging of earth's demigod,
Feeding upon the fond flesh of the soul ;
Or with his talons in the immortal mould
Flapping his blacken'd pinions, ill at ease.

The other passage subterranean is
And guarded to the teeth, for fear by it
Should enter aught of good ; for though itself
The channel is of evil, prevalent
To lay the heart upon a bed of down
And steel it with the waters of oblivion ;
Yet is there risk of good entering with evil

To break the day-dream, and the lullèd heart
Prick in its fleshy conscience. Fear there is,
Because its portal opens on this earth,
The starry heavens and a mechanism
That shews the hand of the Invisible.
And therefore at the gate is posted one
For ever watchful, sleepless, full of eyes ;
Whose glance detects presence of good, as quick
As would Heaven's sentinel the reach of evil—
The breath of good as that the taint of ill ;
And as he sifts from out the cumbering mass
The grain of good, or, in his crucible
Making it sure, weighs out the speck of gold,
He casts it in the iron lap of one
Who sits co-sentinel athwart the gate
All further entrance of good preventing ;
Who at the hateful sound rejects the bauble
And casts it out over a precipice
To be devour'd by the hungry sea,
Or trod by foul swine feeding at the base.

They never to the other speak nor look :
The one ne'er moves his eye from off its guard ;
No ; never, in the moment of success
To have found the escaping good, that tawny
 eye
Moves from its centre—gleams not—gazes on
Fix'd, petrified to its work, immoveable,
And feeds itself on its consuming oil.
The other sightless is, that his keen ear
The better may detect the step of good :
And did it come on tiptoe near his hold,
Or on the silken wings of evening
Fell it not heavier than a feather falls,
That ear would be instinct with rustling sounds—
Loud cadences—an enemy's approach ;
His echoing armour would ring out the alarm,
And every bolt and bar the passage through
And subterranean vault be doubly closed.
They speak not—save at night and break of day
The challenge to accept or give, ' All's well.'

But when secure from good they yield assent,
To let the postern open, you might see,
Mocking an angel's form—all light—all beauty—
In glittering vestment and of radiant hue,
A Peri stand, and in her hand a glass
Of curious device, the world to show
In soft dissolving scenes, succeeding each
So rapidly, and yet with the impress
That each is permanent, that the dazzled heart
Grows to the extreme of fondness, and itself
Incases in the ravishing reflection.

And by her stands her half or foster brother—
Uncertain what his lineage, but allied
Within the bar and ban of matrimony :
Tho' none had thought they twain were of one
womb ;
His sullen scowl and swart complexion
So strangely did with her fair face contrast
And smile of witching fascination.

Less had you thought that they were leagued in
love ;

He on her beauty look'd and was ravished,
She on his hideousness and was enamour'd ;
As women sometime most exceed in love
For what most loathsome and unlikely is.
Deep-taught he was in ancient lore ; all lands
From either frozen pole to the equator,
From our sweet west round to the west again,
Had visited, the denizen of all,
All isles—all lands—all climes—all continents,
But free alone to bind—to hold in thralldom.
He with the zone of abject slavery,
A miracle of power, does all lands hold
Bound to his monstrous will ; that not a babe
Draws breath, that can escape his tortuous eye,
But is enfolded in his slacken'd girdle
With all earth's millions, immured in darkness,
Or, for his appetite, imbrued in blood.
He, stern assessor, sits by the heart's throne,

And while he lavishes incestuous smiles
Upon the dream of his idolatry—
On her who mantled by him ever stands
In colours as the iris many-hued,
He holds the rack, and as inquisitor
Screws to the death all hateful innocence.

Last are there twain that in the natural heart
Reign paramount, enthroned ; surpass'd by none
In all true fealty and fidelity.
They, as I saw, on equal thrones were seated
In its pavilion of wrought burnish'd steel,
So temper'd by the fanning flames of hell
As ever to make summer in that court ;
The heat to cool—the cold so tepify—
As never to disturb the lazy air
That with its muffled wings wafteth the incense
For ever burning in the midst and wrapping
In luscious slumber and sweet after-dream
The soothed and lulled heart.

Twins they are—

Born at a birth, most like the other are they,
Of equal form, the same in lineament ;
The difference to detect were difficult,
Save for their different acts and attitude.
The one endued with power is to scan
All outer things. Within that polish'd dome,
Which doth on every side reflect himself,
Save for one opening to be closed at will,
There sitteth he—like the astronomer
Whose gaze intent to either horizon
Down the meridian passes from the zenith
And back in restless search—there sitteth he,
His peerless eye fed with two flames at once—
Fed from the altar of self-sacrifice,
And with whole hecatombs of outer things,
Seem only to be sacrificed to self.
For as aught meets that glance, of highest
good,
Or such as temper'd is with earth's alloy—

Of man, or angel, or of the Supreme,
'Tis frown'd upon as hated rivalry,
'Tis scorn'd as worthless of more sympathy,
Forgotten 'tis as that which never was :
Human pretension were impertinence ;
An angel's grace—that were deformity ;
God were not good enough to do him homage.
Thus for his liege does this imperious regent
Infuse the poison of supremacy,
And giveth him to quaff the deadly draught.

And as for his co-twin—co-emperor,
His art it is upon the polish'd mirror
To show the heart itself—not as it is
Bared to the eye of God—not as it is
Wrapp'd in the serpent-folds of Satan, steep'd
In deadliest narcosy, incapable
Save to dream false is fair, truth to be fiction,
Good to be evil, and the evil good—
But in disguise and in an angel's form.

He and the heart such intimate union have—
Such an identity of thought and being
That it were difficult to separate
Their several acts and not confound the two.
Yet are they separate, for divisible,
Tho' for their oneness scarce discernible.

He on the outer region never looks,
But ever on the burnish'd mirror views
Himself reflected, and to the greedy heart
Takes such sweet tastes — sweet sights — sweet
sounds of self

(He and the heart being like-imaged)
As fill it to the top and overflow
Of overweening self-idolatry
To the drowning of all thought or care for else,
That it enamour'd lies of its own likeness
Feeding on self ; and like that youth of old
Whose fountain'd beauty drown'd him in self-love,
This ever looks upon its mirror'd self

And holds the heart with its soft cords of love
Entranced with its own image.

These nearest to their sovereign liege keep guard.
The one, by prepossession of itself,
Scorneth all outer things as 'neath its thought
And nothing worth in the comparison
But to be burn'd in incense to itself :
This bars the heart against all outward good.
The other liveth in a world its own,
And itself offers up for sacrifice ;
Consumes itself on self-idolatry :
This locks the heart in to all inner evil.

Or else, I ween, self-love the fountain is
Wherein the fond heart looketh and is lost.
And if it be, then 'tis the virgin moat
'Cross which as yet was never drawbridge flung,
'Cross which as yet not all the embattled host
Of earth or heaven, created, ever pass'd.

There bathes the heart secure in its own fountain,
Its waters to such force impregnable ;
It basks at golden ease, and little dreaming
Foul are the waters tho' they seem so fair,
The font and flood of hell not heaven are.

But be it so. Be the heart throned in darkness—
Light only to itself, and wrapp'd around
In all the manifolded coils of sin ;
And were it drugg'd with all the opiates
Of earth, hell, sin, combined in deadly league,
Were it engulf'd in mortal lethargy,
Steep'd in fourfold insensibility,
Yet would the Spirit thro', darkness disseize,
The invulnerable pierce, the triple knot—
Were it intangible as hollow air—
Would sever at a stroke, and with it touch
The dead heart into life, tho' it were bleach'd

White as the bones laid in the open valley
Blanch'd with the summer sun—the winter rain
A century—very many—very dry ;
Or were it charr'd, past all recognisance,
Black with the scathing flames of sin and hell,
Yet would HE thro'. Tho' Satan held his own
Back'd by the legions of all mighty hell,
HE would pass thro', and with His wand—His
word

The enthralled heart deliver, tho' it were barr'd
And bolted with the triple force of self,
Of sin, and Satan, and these multiplied
A thousand thousand-fold ; tho' it were weigh'd
Down with a weight would fill the vasty open
'Tween heaven and earth, and the heart under-
most,
'Twould move it as a feather, and would bid
The light heart arise.

But how ? 'Tis never of Himself He speaks—

It is with something other than Himself
He thro' all bars—all bolts—all hindrances
Enters within and takes the strong heart captive.

Christ's sorrow potent is as to procure,
So to prevent ; and as the Spirit never
Could out of holy Heaven have been gotten
Save by the blood of Christ, so could it never
Within the unholy enter save by that blood.
'T must have therewith to cleanse : and as the
 shadows

Must purgèd be with blood of sacrifice,
So must the substance, the immortal soul—
In its lone entry, the unhallow'd heart—
Have blood to cleanse—Thy blood, Emmanuel !
This must the Spirit take—this will He take ;
He enters only with the blood of Christ.
It is with this He washes white the dungeon
So that no angel's eye can see aught foul,
No, nor the eye of God, for that same blood

All potent is to blot all foulness out,
And in its place put perfect righteousness :
It cancels, on the instant, legal guilt ;
And over all the body of this death
Doth interpose between the soul and God
And on the sinner put the seamless robe
That mantles thro' the infinite of Heaven—
The spotless righteousness of God's own Son ;
While underneath—thro' the heart's avenues—
Unwearying, to remove inherent sin,
The Holy Spirit works—to make all gold
Within, as 'tis without ; all things to cleanse
And purify with blood Divine, thro' faith,
Applied to the soul's weal.

Nay, as I look'd, I saw it was Christ's sorrow
That pull'd down every bar, each bolt drew back,
Wide open flung each door, and enter'd in—
Past highest battlement and embrasure,
Thro' cavernous defile or solid rock ;

'Gainst all devices of the enemy—
And, as a king, possess'd the citadel.

Christ's sorrow was it in the Spirit's hand.
'Twas to His touch—bearing the golden light
Not without blood and fire purified
And of its high emprise made capable—
'Twas at His touch that welded mass gave way ;
And darkness, be it gross or subtle more
Than anything out of heaven not divine,
Was by that keener edge discountenanced,
And fled in abject terror, pierced to the death.
Its edge within that edge tho' thin as air,
Had enter'd, and down thro' the ponderous mass
Swift pass'd as the intangible mercury,
And all the monster giant shrivell'd up
As 'twere a scroll. It was not. That huge bar
That did all Heaven cross out with its sole bulk
Or with its keenness thought to cleave Heaven's
throne,

Dissolvèd was by divine aquafort
And its place no more found.

The next to it,

Tho' it had rusted in its silent hold—
Tho' it had laid its giant head for aye
Upon the stifled heart, yet at the touch
Does from its solid hold—its welded grasp,
Tho' it were iron into iron threaded
With hot alternate bolts cool'd down by ages,
Part as the flimsy noiseless spider's web,
Or easily as to the breath of morn
O'er sweet bean-fields the floating gossamer ;
The ponderous weight lifts as the brooding mist
And lets the still'd heart pant.

Then thought I, 'Never—never will it pass
Those sentinels so keen of eye and ear
And monstrous to shut out the light of heaven
As of yore Ossa upon Pelion piled,
Oh ! it will never pass !'

But at the word

There fell on them charms of such potency
As lock'd their keenest sense in the firm hold
And glassy torpor of suspension,
And render'd them incapable of ill
As to all good alike insensible.

Then bolt on bolt and bar on bar gave way,
And every gate the cavernous passage thro'
As by an earthquake, all unhinged lay ;
And they who held, within, their base amours,
The beautiful and monstrous, foul and fair—
Fair only to the sight but foul within,
Fled, and their place no more for aye was found.
As you have seen upon the reared mountains,
Or on low plain, broad river, and still lake,
Or haply on the bosom of the deep,
The white mist cumbering brood ; then—at the
moment,
You know not why, save 'tis the hidden motion

The latent force of the wind's alchemy,
For the air fanneth not—moves not—is still,
And on that white weight waiteth, motionless,
And her wings weighs not, yet may you have seen
The curtain lift, and all the hidden mine—
The height—breadth—depth of nature's loveliness
Lay open to the flooded, tranced gaze.
So at the breath of the Almighty Spirit,
Tho' imperceptible as viewless air,
The Twain—those mists and exhalations rank,
Bred in the sun upon the heart's hot-bed—
Forthright are rolled away, tho' they were
rooted
With their interminous and cancerous fibres
Down to the bare heart's core, yet do they rise
And let light in upon that globe of night.

Then, at the dread surprise, in ghastly fear
And pale as death, but of Herculean height,
Rose Sin from off her 'couch of lasting night'

And unbroke revelry, and would have fled,
But closèd was each secret avenue ;
And more, all power to fly—to move—was gone.
The light has piercèd in—it gleams—it glistens—
It brighter glows—it gathereth eminence—
It moveth sensibly—it comes—it comes !
It takes the likeness of a glittering sword !
And as I look'd, it bathèd was in Heaven
And wreathèd was with blood, and on it came
Moving straight forward—stilly—steadily
Upon that horror-stricken monstrous form—
That gaze that could not turn from its death-stroke.
It came—and tho' no hand was seen to wield
That sword attemper'd by the breath of Heaven,
It sever'd at a stroke the opposing mass
And all Sin's viperous brood disclosèd, slain
Yet having power from their envenom'd fangs
A while to taint the freed and sever'd heart.

Nor Satan with less fear nor dread surprise

Confounded fled, abased ; not without risk,
Or forlorn hope, with every leaguèd stride
Downward to shake his ancient citadel,
Which heaved, as heaves earth to the undershock
Of fires imprison'd in her angry womb.
Nor sooner had he gain'd the cavern's mouth
That downward wended to his own domain
Than, at the touch of angels, glided past,
Grazing the tips of his outstretchèd wings,
A gate, impregnable, of sevenfold brass,
And closed behind him with a shock that shook
Hell to its centre, and the faltering foot
Of the arch-fiend well-nigh o'erbalancèd.
Yet, as methought, that barrier closed not
Which lock'd out Hell, and the heart in to
 Heaven,
Before that swifter thing than motion, sound—
Sweet sounds—the melody of angels, singing,
'Glory to God and to the Lamb, and peace—
Peace to the rescued soul and joy '—were heard

Not only thro' the gladden'd courts of Heaven,
Not only thro' the new heart's avenues,
But thro' the black abodes of fell despair ;
And every spirit and most him, who now
Rankled with fresh defeat, pierced to the quick
With agony, as when a mother sees
The pitiless steel piercing her new-born babe.

And, simultaneously, the twain that kept
Guard nearest to the heart (if nearest any,
When all are one with it) fell from their
 thrones.

The one I saw hurled hurtling thro' the air
As far as from the heavens to this earth,
And dash'd he was into a thousand fragments.
The other, as the glittering sword pass'd thro',
Touch'd as by instant all-consuming lightning,
Sank on his inward instant funeral pyre
And floated from his falling throne a thing
Light as the linen-ash.

Then from its sometime swoon with gentlest
touch

The Spirit of all goodness woke the heart
As yet o'ercome with dread and unbelief,
And 'fore it placed its High Deliverer—
JESUS—as tho' expiring on the cross,
Yet saying to the heart, 'Believe in ME.'
And with such silvery sounds that sweet voice
came

Borne on the soft wings of the heavenly Dove,
That all the heart stood open and confest,
And ravish'd was with its Deliverer.
'Twas there all washèd from its guilty stains,
'Twas there all cleansèd from the love of sin,
'Twas there all healèd of its deep disease,
'Twas there all capable of God and love.
The Spirit has that deadly dungeon wash'd
White with the blood of Christ, prevenient ;
Has open'd Heaven's windows to the soul ;
Has in the centre rear'd a holy altar

And with a living coal from Heaven's fires
Kindled the ever-rising flame of love,
Of joy and peace, of wingèd praise and prayer,
And, eminent o'er all, humility.
And in such heart He takes His residence :
He can : for it is holy by Christ's blood :
Christ's sorrow fitted hath the lowly heart
To be the palace of the KING OF KINGS.

ONCE, in the dream of childhood, did I read
Of a strange rock, rear'd in the midst of ocean,
Which, when tall ships were passing in their pride,
Tho' leagues remote and out of sight of danger,
Would with its magic power flutter their canvas
And turn them from their course—would bring
 them round

To lie down, 'gainst all force of wind and tide
Or human skill or seaman's lore and art,
With all sail set, straight on its dooming coast—
A white and perishing thing !

Onward 'twould sail,

And faster cleave the opening trenchèd waters ;
Then as it came in sight, each nail and screw
And bolt and bar would crackle in their berths—
Would 'gin to start from their close fastnesses
And moorings in the thick and ribbèd oak ;
And as it near'd and under shadow came
Of the black beetling sides, the iron flew
To weld itself on that mysterious mountain,
And let the goodly vessel, plank by plank,
And beam by beam, with all its living freight
Drift on the tragical and tearless waters.
While here and there, beyond all hope, it gave
Escape for some—and past its outer rim
'Twas said to be a very paradise—
To most it was their doom, and round its shores
Dash'd their bleach'd bodies till they sank for
aye.
A strange it was and dreamy wonderment.
But now methinks I have the rock discover'd
And 'gin to unravel all its mystery.

We all are vessels on the trackless deep
That lies between us and eternity.
Some nobler are, and to the outward gaze
Carry all heaven in their eye ; and some
Sail nearer earth ; but be they what they may,
Each has on board a freight of priceless worth—
A diamond, which, if this world of ours
That costly jewel were—one—undivided—
All light to give to the whole universe
And heaven dazzle with its brilliancy—
Nay, add to it all other worlds on worlds
And let each weigh its price in its full weight
Of that all-precious and all-peerless gem—
Be every world we see a diamond—
And let them all be cast into the balance,
This would outweigh the whole.

Each vessel as it leaves the port of time
And rears its embryo sail to catch the winds
That carry it across life's troubled channel

To the eternal shore, is laden with
The germ—the gem of immortality—
Imperishable life, or, if to die,
Imperishable death—a deathless soul—
Ever to live and honour give to Heaven,
Life with the Life-giver thence commensurate ;
Or to die ever—ruin such as worlds
On worlds and elements of things dissolved
Can never tell the like ! This is the jewel
That hidden lies within this goodly casket.

But tho' each freighted is with such a prize,
Each madly dares to risk the prize he bears
To the rough winds, that from yon nether womb
Blow pitilessly fierce to board the vessel
And rack and rifle all her jewelry—
To the false currents of that fair cameleon,
Life's ever-fickle ever-varying ocean—
Without or chart or compass, while Self sits
And holds the rudder bands, and as a Queen

Bids the all-traversing winds of this false world
Fill her white sails.

She's passing in her pride—
But, mark ! her full sails in an instant flap—
From stem to stern she trembles as an aspen
And her tall masts creak to the backening blast
And bend as they were saplings—will they break ?
And will her bulging—furrowed—frowning canvas
Bury her broad decks in the mountain wave
That rises on her stern, that it so apes
With its unfriendly freight the swelling waters ?
A moment—and 'tis past ! she sinks not—rises
And in full sail her contrary course
Against all baffling winds and raging billows
Steers onward for that dread mysterious Rock.
'T has cast its shadow o'er her—on she must !
'T has cast its shadow o'er her and each pin
And bolt and bar begin to drag—to loosen—
To totter in their holds, tho' they be riveted
Into the natural life and tied down

With the soul's insoluble ligatures
 Past all the powers of man or hell to break,
 Could all be fasten'd to them, so that each hand
 Of all the serried phalanxes of men
 And demons, from the first of time to the end,
 Could lay its hold thereon, it could not sever :
 Nay, add to these the high-born potencies
 That people heaven—all could not avail
 (Tho' every hand of all should tug together)
 To slack one cord—one iron pin to loose.
 But under shadow of that magic Rock
 Whose topmost pinnacle unseen has wheel'd
 The vessel round as 'twere a cockle-boat,
 They rustle in their berths—they rive—they part,
 Tho' they be steeped in Lethe's steeling waters,
 Firm with the rust of ages—fast as one.

That ROCK is JESUS ! and the potent wind
 The Almighty Spirit is, that doth His bidding
 And embassy of love ! He it is who turns

The swelling heart of man—with all sail set
For its uncertain future, but not less
Certain engulfment in the burning lake—
Turns it straight round, and 'gainst all contraries—
The red-hot blasting breath of the arch-fiend,
The breathings of the Siren sin, as deadly,
The world's magicienry, the heart's deceit,
Self—the high traitor and dark suicide,
'Gainst one—'gainst all, tho' they be leagued
sevenfold,

He draws it to Himself. And as it nears,
The bolts and bars wherewith by man's first fall
And Satan's craft these hearts of ours are forged
To stand against the impress of high Heaven—
The pins and nails whereon our hope of Heaven
And our self-righteousness was hung secure
And rusted to the ingrowth of the soul—
The screws whereby corruption, love of sin
And practice, was screw'd down to the heart's
core—

Start in their natural crevices, their sockets
Wide open split, and to the risk of pulling
This outer framework down, as they disjoint
The inner and unseen, they part—they fly—
They hurtle thro' the dark and iron sky
And pierce the Rock with their ten thousand fangs
And poisonous barbs, and there they lie—are
lost—

Are hidden in that cleft and riven Rock,
Which now is seen a crimson tide to pour—
A fountain, open'd once, for ever flowing,
Till Time outspent shall lay his weary head
Upon the wide lap of Eternity—
And as the shipwreck'd mariner floats near
And cometh underneath the purple torrent,
'Tis found the Rock he dreaded is his Life ;
Its stair his only landing-place 'twixt Hell
And Heaven ; its side the healing of his wounds,
Tho' else incurable as Satan's pride ;
Its living stream doth flow to pardon sin,

Speak peace, and hope—that desolate thing—to
raise

And place straight upright on its feet, and bid
Its downcast eye be lifted to the heavens
And pierce with eagle glance within the veil,
And read its covenant fast made with God
And seal'd with the eternal seal—red blood—
Heaven's composite—whereon the Holy Spirit
Has placed His finger chain'd—fix'd—motionless,
There, and here—on this impressible new
mould—

The fleshy contrite heart.

The shipwreck'd 's saved—

The dead's alive again—the lost is found !

The Rock the ROCK OF OUR SALVATION is !
Within whose wall is more than Paradise.
Not to destroy but save it reared stands :

But round its base who won't be saved are lost.
Still, multitudes as countless as the waves,
Or countless as the tears which Jesus shed,
Or countless as the sighs He breathed for them,
Dash, in their fury or their falsity,
Against the Rock they made their Rock of woe.
More hopeless that 't has rear'd its head for them
And cast its shadow o'er their troubled sea ;
More hopeless they've so near'd its halcyon shore ;
Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom—on Heaven's stair—
Against the foot of Him who walks its King,
Their only hope, omnipotent to save—
Theirs must be hopeless—pitiless—stern death.

BUT then I did another wonder see
Which 'gan to fill mine eye with misery :
The heart I saw so wash'd, so clean, so fair,
So full of joy and full of Heaven's air,
Within it—saw I what ? Oh, sad to see !
Those enemies that fell so dead, so slain
That you had thought that they had ever lain
Past power to breathe—to move—to harm again,
'Gan from their abject overthrow to wake.

I trampled under foot the linen-ash,

But could not trample out the running sparks ;
The shatter'd shards 'gan piece themselves again ;
I saw the bloodless form of sever'd Sin
Glide as a phantom thro' the heart's arcades ;
And in despair, I turn'd my eager eye
Upon the brazen gate to see 'twas fast
That Satan could not back ; and then, alas !
Tho' firm the gate, in it I saw a grating
That could be moved at will—
Then presently I fainted at the fear
That one and all those deadly foes again
Would come and take my poor heart prisoner.
Whereon a voice—so sweet it was, I knew not
Whether it was an angel's or the Lord's,
Or whether 'twas the breathing of the Spirit ;
But it was like a Father's voice and soft
As it had pass'd thro' all the airs of Heaven—
Fell on mine ear, 'Fear not : trust thou in ME,
Not in thyself, and thou shalt conqueror be ;
These enemies of thine and mine, tho' slain,

Live to be seen and fear'd, to keep the heart
Recumbent upon God—resting in Him.
They live a while, but in degree of death,
To try—to tempt—to prove—but not to slay ;
A little while and thou shalt be with ME,
And those thine enemies shalt see no more.'
Then knew I 'twas the Lord. Then said my heart,
'The Lord my shepherd is ; I shall not want :'
A babe—I rested in Almighty strength.

But as I woke fresh wonder hemm'd me round,
For now I found myself equipp'd for war ;
My loins were girded, and my breastplate on ;
Sandall'd my feet ; and over all a shield
To Hell's all-fiery darts invulnerable ;
Upon my head an helmet ; in my hand
A sharp two-edged sword ; nor was this all,
An angel guard, invisible, was placed
To aid in time of need ; and, visible,
To do the new heart's momentary bidding,

Around about were placèd sentinels
Evil to challenge, and all good let pass.
And what fresh wonder o'er my spirit shed,
Some for its guard were given that of old
Watch'd in defence of evil ; now transform'd
As the transformed heart. Of these the first
And holding highest rank, now firmest friend
Where erst 'twas deadliest foe, tho' friend sup-
posed,
Placed in the van was Hate—Heaven's sentinel,
Hatred of evil as afore of good ;
Hatred of evil in what form it came ;
And tho' it dress'd itself in seraph's robes
And put the figure on of an archangel,
Were it the highest spirit out of Heaven
That counsell'd aught to God's Word contrary,
Then with the gospel sandall'd—shod with peace,
The champion of true love—true charity,
Then was it his, with his sword bathed in heaven,
To give no quarter.

And with him—one with him,
Bound in the bonds of closest union,
And indiscernible where ended that
Or this began, was Love—love of all good ;
Supreme, of Him who is Essential Love,
And every divine appertenance ;
Next, of His creatures. This the ocean is
That girds the heart with supernatural power ;
This the pure Fount, wherein the new heart bathes
And drinks delicious draughts of things divine
And of foretasted Heaven.

But over all—nay, all His product are,
His new creation and His handiwork,
Without Him they were not, nor power have they
But as He gives, instinct with His free Breath—
But over all, the new heart's only safeguard,
Presides the heavenly Spirit, resident
All good to cherish in the new-born soul,
All evil to destroy. Then felt I strong :

Till mine eye fell upon the grated gate !
Down on one knee I sank—my helmet dropp'd—
Then came He to my aid and bade me rise,
And to me shew'd that troublous mystery.
On the heart's side alone the opening was :
He bade me look upon the other side ;
Entire was it—of celestial mould,
Even to Satan's self impregnable :
But on this side, two hands there are can open ;
One is Almighty—the other is all-weak.
The one He bid me see was His, to let
The angry powers of Hell buffet the soul,
Only—at His permission ; and anon
When their fell work is done—to tempt, not
conquer,
And when they most suppose their victory sure,
And like a flood they sweep the traversed heart,
Unfurleth He his standard, and forthwith
The baffled routed hosts of Hell drives back,
Using their evil only for His good.

The other as He shew'd me is all-weak ;
'Tis thine,' He said ; ' forgetful of My presence,
Forgetful of thy good, or standing in
Thy strength not Mine—forgetful of My grace,
Secure when most thou shouldest fearful be,
Thou with presumptuous hand canst that bar
loosen
And let the foe thou darest enter in.'
Then said I, ' Lord ! O ! bind me by Thy grace—
Bind my presumptuous hand, that never I
Shall dare this deed against Thy sovereignty.'

Thus did I see that by Thy sorrow, Lord !
Thou hadst almighty grace for me procured :
Nay more, Thou didst the Almighty Spirit give,
That by Thy Blood and Spirit I might live.

VI.

PERFECT IN ADAPTATION.

THEN did I cast mine eye on a broad field
That stretch'd before me with fresh wonders strewn,
With such profusion of all beautiful things,
With such variety of each from each,
With such perfection of each in itself,
With such a harmony of all with all,
Each fraught with such surpassing aptitude,
Such a divine and heavenly counter-charm
Of sorrow sorrow's spell to disenchant,
So apt was each for the occasion,
That soon mine eyes ran over with the draught

It drank from off that pure widening expanse ;
Nor wonder, for 'twas infinite.

But first

Mine eye did rest upon a garden, such
As never Heaven had witness'd for rare beauty,
As ever since has earth mourn'd herself for.
'Twas planted by the hand of the Lord God,
'Twas by His eye seen to be very good,
It was in all perfections exquisite,
It was our poor earth's contrast—better seen
By what it was not, than by what it was.
'Twas *thornless* ; there no thorns upon the trees,
No weeds upon the ground, but ever flowers,
Unarm'd did revel in earth's virgin bowers,
Unmix'd did spangle on her emerald main.
'Twas *sinless* ; take sin out, let thorns and
thistles
Grow to the height of heaven and heaven o'ertop,
Yet without sin this were a Paradise.
But ere sin came, no bird of the air might find

On all earth's surface the germ of a weed
Big as a mustard seed ; so in her compass
The germ of sin was not, but as weedless
So was earth sinless in the eye of God.
'Twas *deathless* ; strewn with immortality ;
For where sin was not, death could never be ;
Never a consequence without a cause.
Oh ! were this earth without a germ of sin,
Oh ! were this earth without a seed of death,
Were it without a blot, a blur, a thistle ;
Had never sin ran counter to high Heaven,
Had never sin God's image marr'd in man,
Had never sin defaced His handiwork—
Never gone upward to the throne of God,
Never gone inward to the heart of man,
Never gone outward on the face of nature—
Then were this earth the Paradise of Eden.
And there God put the man whom He had
form'd
In His own image, and with him the woman,

Both moulded to His eye, and very good :
They lived and walk'd with God, and God with
them.

But on a day must this high workmanship
And masterpiece of God's creative hand
Come to the test—must to the stern ordeal.
This for a proof of its perfection ;
Not needed less than is the crucible
For silver or than is the fire for gold ;
Not needed less than for the armourer
To test and prove the weapon he has form'd.
Now the high thread on which man's mechanism
Was wrought, on which suspended, on which drawn
To the utmost power of tension, was his free-will.
Not like his Maker if not like in that ;
Not fit His service if not free to will ;
That were the very cord of perfectness
A rational creature must have. And this
Must to the test, which to choose—good or evil ?

If, formèd good, it chose the good, 'twas perfect ;
If it the evil chose, 'twas reprobate.

Then came the day on for the dread ordeal ;
And all Heaven's eyes were bent upon them twain
In sevenfold suspense sustain'd by love
And hope of good triumphant over evil :
And on them too Hell open'd wide its gaze
And every demon look'd, his fell despair
Lit with the hope of evil ; and at once
All Hell was silent—stayed the imprecations
That lash its molten waves of flame to storm
And wreathe the fiery deluge with white heat ;
Tho' stayed—not lessen'd, for in every breast,
If breast, the breathless curse did concentrate,
Gathering malignance in suspense of evil,
And most of all in his—the Prince of darkness,
Hell's Potentate, the Tempter.

It were vain—

(Yet know I not ; so clear God's interdict,
And their offence—to cross the bound assign'd
And with adventurous foot o'erstep the limit
Of their out-meted principality,
Heaven's fairest, and to leave their own domain,
The abode of angels, whether to draw nearer,
Were it a pace, His Throne who sits in light,
Or further off recede to essay new worlds)
For us to search how sin enter'd Heaven,
How natures not like ours were tried and fell,
Fell without hope of rescue, reft of God,
Into provisionless abyss of horror ;
Save we might deem their goodlier natures need
Not less than ours the proof of goodliness :
And to have seen all good—look'd upon God—
To have had all Heaven open to their eyes
And the Enthroned above the Heaven of heavens—
To have seen Him and then to choose aught else
(Not to set limits to His sovereign grace
Who this rejects, that takes, of men ; and man

Rather than angels doth elect to save)
Were sin so damnable that Heaven itself
Shall not wipe out the spot (yet theirs not less,
Seen by their not less doom, who Christ reject
And trample underfoot the Son of God
And put salvation from them)—sin so rank
That the high will and sovereignty of God
Consigns to irremediable woe
Its fell participants, left without hand
To endure the vengeance of eternal fire.

Enough for us to trace sin's entry here
On this once perfect earth and God's footstool
When on Eve's slumbering, unsuspecting ear
Fell the insidious poison, 'Yea, hath God said ?'
It matters not whether 'twere subtilty
Alone that arm'd that subtlest of creatures ;
Or whether the Lost Angel did infuse
The baneful thought, or haply did himself
Assume the serpent's form : the veil'd temptation

Was by permission of our God. Nor yet
Had sin an entrance gained, from earth debarr'd ;
Nor Satan yet footing had found on earth.
Intact as yet this world, as was the Lord
Assail'd by all the artifice of Satan
Then with unflooded power on earth let loose.
Eve and our Federal Head had sinless been,
Unscathed by the temptation, tho' it were
Dyed in the pit of Hell and rank with sin,
As after was our Great New Federal Head,
Had they the ill and deadly bane resisted.
Nor on them had the tinge and taint of sin
Pass'd in that moment of the world's ordeal ;
Not more than on those Hebrew youths of old
Fresh from the furnace, heated sevenfold
Beyond its wont, and on their coats and hosen
Had pass'd the smell of fire. So were they free.

The origin of sin, then, on our earth
Lay not in our First Parents being tempted,

But, being form'd so noble, so like God,
With the free will to choose the good, and evil
Upon the bare suggestion to reject,
Lay in admitting question of God's word
And so admitting lust—the impure desire
Of that which God forbade ; the wish, with God,
Being rank as the offence.

Nor matters it

Whether it were the least or greatest thing
That lust did set its foul affections on,
So that it were beneath God's interdict.
'T may seem a simple thing and very light
Only to pluck an apple from a tree,
To touch its plumage, tear its fimbriage,
And taste the golden fruit—it may seem light ;
But if God's interdict lay on the act,
As well pull down the heavens as dare that deed.
God's No is on that apple, and who breaks
The stalk, pulls down the law and the law's ven-
geance.

Nor matters it whether within the compass
Of that fair fruit and in its mystic juices
Lay there the compound virtue, knowledge giving
Of good and evil, as in the tree of life
The power to live for ever—deathlessness
By unavoidable investiture :
Or whether came the knowledge by the act—
Whether midmost in Eden's virgin mazes
That mystic tree hard by the tree of life
Stood the conveyer of such wonderment
By the forbiddance of our God upon it ;
Whether upon the top and overflow
Of the forbidden fruit, just by the breach
Of God's known law, not in the fruit itself,
The knowledge came, and for the wish'd-for prize
Came in the blank.

It matters not. The arm is raised aloft—
The eye's intent upon the golden globe—
The hand is on the fruit—'tis pluck'd—'tis eaten !

And all Heaven weeps, and Hell is mad with
mirth—

Such mirth as demons have—to gloat on evil—

Hail its companionship to curse and scorn.

Such was the birth of sin ; when lust conceived—

The lust to have that one forbidden thing,

Upon the theatre of this fair world

It brought forth sin, that hydra-headed monster

Whose seeming puny arm went to assail

The Throne of Heaven and Him who sits thereon ;

And sin being perfected gave birth to death.

Then all was changed. Upon that garden fair

Fell there a blight, a canker that did eat

All goodness out of things, made all things wear

Death in the apple of their eye ; but most

Transfixed at the instant were they twain :

Creation's masterpiece was laid most low.

Three darts there were that at the instant pierced
Them twain, the happy pair—happy in God,
In Eden happy, happy in their love.
Three yet contemporaneous they were,
Tho' each alike invisible.

The one

Piercèd the body with mortality.
It was a fatal dart that God's good work,
Tho' but the outwork, did infect with pain
And all the countless cohorts of disease,
Till that the body struck with death at first
Yields itself dust to dust.

And, plumed, with this

Flew there another, forged still deadlier,
Which deeper plunged and did its perfect work.
And to my seeming it was doubly-barb'd :
Two fangs it had that fasten'd on the soul
And spirit (if the two are separate)
Whose wild death-shriek throughout all Eden rang,
And all creation scared with sense of change,

And put to flight peace that had reignèd there
And virgin joy that knew till then no break,
But 'neath the sun and brightness of God's face
Circled amid those bowers without pause.
This—to the soul at once all Heaven shut out ;
All Heaven, sad word ! the object of her hope
Blotted from the soul's vision ; and instead,
Above, did wrath Divine open to view,
And overhead the flaming glittering sword
That turnèd every way to guard Heaven's portals
And to descend in vengeance never sated :
Beneath, first rose the yawning pit named Hell :
And on her vision came phantoms of dread,
But phantoms not to pass—not the what seems
But is—endued with being, and that being
Forged for eternity—that can't away :
These steer'd in hateful vision 'thwart the soul,
And, as the fiery surge lit up Hell's night,
O'erwhelm'd the soul with multitudinous woe.
Exposed to endless death and seized with fear

Whose bondage is fit prelude of her fate,
Then sank the soul pierced to the very centre
With all the wrath of God and weight of Heaven,
From all relief in itself and hope cut off:
It sank, as sinks the criminal condemn'd,
Before incensèd Justice, doom'd to death.
That—did the golden cord sever in twain
Wherewith man's spiritual nature held
High intercourse with heavenly things and Heaven,
Whose firmament became as iron and brass.
Nor sever'd only but destroy'd the power,
And did his being make incapable
Of spiritual action, save for ill.
For from the wound inward the venom flow'd
And carried instant death thro' every pore.
Nor only this, but from the spirit quench'd
Desire for God and thirst for past communion
With her Chief Good, once All. So have I seen
Lopt from its parent's side the slender sapling,
That went careering to its native heaven

In all the fulness of its summer prime,
In all the freedom of its essayings,
In all its beauty, grace, joy, bravery.
And as it fell, its leaves upon itself
Did turn their white hands up imploringly ;
Then did they shroud its honour in the dust :
A little while—it was a whiten'd thing ;
And when I came again the remnant sap
Had turn'd its poison ; and on the pitiless ground
The pride of summer lay a blacken'd corse.
But this was instant all—most like the bough
That at the instant of its luxury,
And while it sat in all its royalty,
Secure midmost its summer canopy,
Was blasted by the forkèd lightning's flash.
This did the spirit and the soul of man
Sever from God and all essential good,
And all communion with God cut off.

A third there was (else were they three in one)

That deadliest flew, steep'd in immortal death,
Whose death in it is life dying never,
Whose life in it is death living ever—
The second Death ; barbèd it was with Hell,
The never-dying worm and quenchless fire.
This to consummate all : thence dread becomes
Past dread—endurance ; death, not death : 'twere
light

To lay the body down, hope from the soul
Cast out, cut off communion with God
A while—for this poor life—nay, for a million—
Add more a million million lives—'twere light
(Tho' for a moment separate life from God
Were in itself a Hell too great to bear)
But for eternity ! Eternal death—
Death of the soul and body leagued in one
Unsufferable decease and unsuspended,
Yet having hateful cognizance of death !
For such interminable confusion
Of living death, death were too light a name ;

Eternity itself a transient thing
To speak the what shall be.

Such was our sin's desert ; and all our race
To have lived must thus have died this triple death.

Where would have reign'd eternal death, must
 reign
Eternal life : where sank the soul condemn'd,
The soul must rise reprieved : where the spirit
Dim parlance held with death, from God cut off,
There from death sever'd must it union have
And hold communion and its court with God :
Where sank the body to its native dust
By the irrevocable word, 't must rise.
This ; for not less our loss will countervail :
This ; or salvation were a mockery.

Then take this—it is thine. 'Tis life from death.

Life to the soul. The soul no more condemn'd—
Beneath the wrath of God's stern justice lying,
Rises, her load removed, cancell'd her debt,
Her guilt transferr'd, rises with angel-lightness,
Not knowing whether 'tis Heaven she treads or
earth,

And in the presence of her God unfolds
And folds her golden wings, mute with delight,
And all the whiteness which she wears, not hers
But His, reveals. Jesus has borne the load,
Laid on Himself the guilt, cancell'd the bond,
In the soul's stead become the criminal,
And o'er her cast His Robe of Righteousness.
'Tis white, for that 'tis wash'd in Jesus' blood ;
'Tis light, for that sin's load is laid on Jesus ;
'Tis bright, and to the eye of God most pure,
For that 'tis made the Righteousness of God.
So have I seen a dove, by baffling winds
And beating rains perforce borne back to earth
And breathless laid amid the thorns and scum,

Her gold all tarnish'd and her silver soil'd,
That when the storm was past would straightway
hie

To the next fountain to repair her harm ;
Then mount with golden wings, her plumage dight
As heaven-shed virgin shower on Salmon's height ;
And her sore toil remember'd is no more.
So, tho' the soul has lien among the thorns
And scum of sin, wash'd in the open Fountain—
Whose running stream she sees all crimson'd is
With her fond mate's life-blood, poor Bird !
while she

Saved by his death escapes to open Heaven—
Wash'd in that crimson and yet crystal Fount,
'Tis white as driven snow—nay, than that whiter,
For in God's sight the Heavens not stainless are,
'Tis with Creator-righteousness made white ;
'Tis silvery with the silver of pure Heaven,
'Tis golden with the gold from off Heaven's altar,
That altar—what ? The Son of man Himself !

Christ the eternal folds of His own Robe
Of Righteousness, as King—Redeemer—God,
Has cast around this worm—this dust and ashes !
This soul that He has loved to the death,
Blood-bought, blood-wash'd, and Spirit-quickenèd !
'The glory of the Lord is risen on her ;'
She's comely in the comeliness of Christ—
Clothed in her Bridegroom's marriage-robe is she,
And as a bride she has Christ's jewels on ;
And thus she radiates in her silvery whiteness—
Her weight of golden glory, 'neath the wings
Of her own Sun of Righteousness.

"Tis to the spirit life : awakes the dead,
Stirs the dry bones and on them sinews lays
And flesh, and in them pours the breath of life—
The Spirit of our God ; it opens up
A pathway to the holiest of all,
The Heaven of heavens, where God sits enthroned,
And bosoms His found child again in love ;

A pathway, adown which angels descend
Bringing all instant grace to baffle sin
And strength to conquer Satan.

Life it brings

Eternal : for Eternal Life to die
And make the passage of the tomb must needs
Eternal life have to convey to all.
And then for the poor body—rotten mould !
It clothes it with perpetual verdure—gives
A glory that outshines the firmament,
Equals the stars—the sun ; a body ray'd
Like to the Son of God—clad in His glory.

Thus doth it rescue from the guilt of sin,
Thus doth it rescue from the power of sin,
Thus doth it rescue from sin's consequence.

Then take this—it is thine. 'Tis wet with tears,
For it is furrow'd with a Saviour's sorrow ;

'Tis moist, for that the dews of death are on it ;
'Tis drench'd, for it is dipp'd in agony,
Baptized in blood fresh from your Saviour's side.
'Tis safe, for that Christ carried it thro' death,
And when He left the tomb He left death there
Asleep in His grave-clothes, not to be found ;
And safe, for that He carried it to Heaven,
And there He ever lives to give His gift,
And there He ever lives to interpose
His death for yours—ever to intercede.
'Tis thine if thou wilt have it. Better refuse !
And let the Saviour's agony for thee
Be here as water spilt upon the ground,
And there thy eternal monument of death !
Nay, but my brother and my sister, take it—
'Tis thine if thou wilt have it for the taking.
Oh ! draw aside the too, too cumbering veil
'Twixt you and Christ, and enter into life.
Or, since the work's not human but Divine,
O Holy Spirit ! rend the veil in twain,

And, while my God in glory passes by,
In the cleft rock—Christ's riven side, O ! hide,
The sinner hide ! Then when the racking wind,
The earthquake, and the fire, rend—burst—burn,
And nature swallow up in their own ruin,
Or more—the immortal soul shake to the centre ;
'Mid the convulsion of this solid globe,
Amid the rolling up of these sound heavens,
Amid earth's syncope, Heaven's nothingness,
And dissolution of the elements,
And more—let kindled conscience to her work—
Amid the surges of God's fiery law,
The accusations of the inveterate
Archfiend, and thyself leagued in enmity
Against thyself, the calming still small voice
Is heard above the rack of falling nature—
Above the thunderpeal of Heaven's high law
Fork'd though it be with the eternal fire,
Or that not less convulsive storm that rages
When conscience, riding on her thunder-cloud,

Man severs from himself, and gives to Satan
What God will yet withhold ; through all, midst
all,

'Bove all, is heard the calming still small voice,
'Peace !' 'Tis thy Saviour's sorrow speaks thee
peace,

It is thy Saviour's blood speaks peace to thee—
Says, 'I have gain'd thee peace, I give thee peace ;
Peace, sinner ! thou and God are reconciled.'
Thou canst not break that peace—'tis seal'd on
thee

With the Eternal Signet, and won't break :
Thou wilt not—'tis sweet peace whose sole out-
goings

Would ravish a seraph's heart with past Heaven's
joy.

It is the voice—the hand—the form—the face—
The eye—bend, sinner !—of thy God and Saviour :
The voice—'Fear not, for I—thy God—am with
thee ;'

The hand—'tis pierced, but piercèd holds thee fast :
The form—One like the Son of man it is !
The face—more marrèd 'tis than any man :
The eye—it brings the fountain to mine eye ;
I cannot bear that look ; it thaws, it melts
The icicle within—this heart that 's frozen
Ten fathoms thick down to the very core
With Adam's sin, with all the binding winds
Of this world's winter, and with every blast
Out of Hell's furnace. It thaws—melts—I yield ;
I'm thine, my Saviour !—Thou, my Saviour ! mine.

Thus is there all—all in the Man of Sorrows
That man, the checker'd child of sorrow, needs.
Light for his darkness ; for his deadness life ;
A fountain for the double cure of sin ;
A seamless Robe to clothe the naked in,
Bread for his hunger, water for his thirst—

Raiment and food that shall for ever last ;
Home for the houseless—mansions in the sky
With glory deck'd and with eternity ;
Beauty for ashes—this his bridal dower,
The oil of joy for mourning's changeless lower.
'Tis His to unloose the spirit of heaviness
And in the robe of praise the light heart dress :
The unseen, but crushing—this He takes away
To give the palpable—but light as day.
Praise like a garment shall enshrine the soul,
When Jesus makes the wounded spirit whole ;
Heaven's drapery of praise shall deck him round,
And sorrow's panoply no more be found.

For every poison He—the antidote ;
For every disease—the remedy ;
For every contrary—the countervail ;
For every want—the full and overflow.
Nor only hath He all things in Himself
To minister to man's necessity,

But He Himself in His own Person doth
The office take and suiting ministry.
Thus are we sick and dying ? Jesus is
Not only medicine, but Physician too :
He doth the healing balm find in Himself,
And with His own hand lays it on our woe.
Nor only does He every office fill
His people need, but doth exhaust each office
By the completeness of its ministry.
But who shall tell the all that Heaven's Sorrow
Was to this poor blank world—is to each soul !
'Twere vain to count the infinite Jesus is
To the wreck'd heart of man.

Yet there is one thing more—one secret balm
That interfused is through all His grace ;
And to the sovereign virtue gives a charm
Which only Heaven knows.

On this poor earth

Let it be in the heart of man to do
A princely act—reclaim the wanderer,
The orphan shelter, or the widow save ;
Nay, if our human nature, past itself,
Would beggary itself invest in gold,
And make the poor man's child heir to a dukedom ;
Nay, more unselfish still, be it the mind,
The end, the purpose to reclaim the soul
From Hell and utter ruin ; love—pure love
Be it ; yet such the crudity of man,
He in the very mode he does the act
Mars the approval, and estranges most
Where most he sought to win.

But when He comes

Who to all Heaven giveth laws of love,
He comes enshrined in Divine sympathy,
And every pulse that beats in this rack'd frame
Feels with a touch that would not wake the sigh
Of a babe slumbering on its mother's breast.

Jesus can feel for all ! He feels for all !
All human woes—these are His bosom friends ;
All human woes—these are the sorrows SORROW
Did shed its life-blood for, that in its breast
'T might give them harbour—haven—anchorage,
And make the cold things of earth feel Heaven's
pity—
Love that did never break the bruised reed
Nor quench the smoking flax.

Pity ! thou art a poor and marrèd thing
E'en in the bosom that beats most with thee ;
Thy essayings are borne back by the stern bars
That circle round these hearts of ribbèd ice ;
Thou never canst thy proper plumage wear
And angel-down in this cold atmosphere.
Pity's a thing that out of Heaven thrives not ;
Tho' were it not for its deformèd self—
Its growth, tho' stunted, in each human breast—
This earth were kin to Hell.

But thou shalt have
Thou hast—thy proper form and lineament :
Pity ! thou hast a body to dwell in
Shall give thee infinite scope to soar—to rise—
To spread thy wings o'er all earth's miseries.
Thou hast the human form—human ? Divine,
Of God's own Son for thy pure tabernacle.
Divine thou art in His Divinity,
While in and thro' Divinity itself
The pity Jesus hath sheddeth a grace
That lustre addeth to Divinity.
Nay, it a part is of Divinity ;
For God is love ; love for the wretched—pity ;
Take pity out, God were no longer love ;
But that first quality and essence—love
Being dismember'd from its softer self
Would leave a chasm in Divinity.
But now 'tis perfect—love towards all that's good,
Pity for misery—this makes up God's love
(Revealed love—not residential ; that

Is not a thing for man to speak about,
But veiled lies in Divine mystery).
And thus it flows down to our human nature,
Apparell'd in the soft and downy robe
Of Divine sympathy ; it comes as man,
Whiles it is God.

 'Twas not enough that sorrow
Should bleed itself to death to bear our woes ;
But when 't had taken up its life again,
Then must it be a very sensitive plant ;
And every throb that wakes the human breast
Touches the tender spring of heavenly love.
Our woes, tho' multitudinous as leaves,
Have on that Plant a leaf for every woe ;
A leaf that curleth in at every touch ;
A leaf that runneth to the parent stem,
Fresh virtue finds, and soon is out again ;
A leaf—that while it makes the whole plant
 bleed,
A leaf of healing is for every need ;

And does its work so tenderly, so true,
The tenderest heart its touch will never rue.

Thus is the Man of Sorrows to our want
Suited—as fulness is to vacancy.
Nor only so, but with such light airs comes
His fulness to the vacant soul of man,
That all the broken tendrils of the heart
Are touch'd, as if with zephyrs out of Heaven
Or divine liniments, so gently
They know not they are touch'd save that they're
heal'd.

And when again a tendril's out of joint
And mourneth in its anguish to its Liege,
It knows not save that it is in again.

VII.

PERFECT IN PROMISE.

THEN was His sorrow

Perfect in promise : so that you might say
That every drop of sorrow, shed or womb'd,
Was, as the raindrops held in Heaven's bow,
Caught in the glass of God—in Heaven's prism,
And bore the deep dyes and the glorious hues
Of sorrow sacred with Divinity :
And that it did moreo'er hold up its arc
To be the beaming and transmuting power
Of earthly sorrow into heavenly joy ;
Saying, ' shall earthly sorrow not prevail,'
And ' the least heavenly drop shall not be
drown'd.'

Perfect in promise, present and to come,
'He that believeth, enters into rest :'
'Tis now ; no unsunn'd joy droopeth her wings
And lonely broodeth on the darkling waves
Till when the flood shall sink and let her
 pluck
The olive branch of victory and set
Her foot on Canaan's everlasting hills ;
No waiting till joy's vacancy be fill'd
And flooded with eternity of light ;
No faltering to rise is there or need be ;
But now, joy springing from the breast of love,
And on the wings of faith and hope upborne,
Finds Heaven open to her essayings,
And untold space to wing her airy rounds
Straight 'neath the eye of God, and bathe herself
In light with golden radiance from the beams
And over-arching wings, the healing dews
Distilling, of 'the Sun of Righteousness.'

Such joy was his—the suicide in thought,
Who ere the night was out—nay, in that hour
When murder stole a passage in his heart
And darken'd him with extinct life, foul death,
Eternal curse, yet in that selfsame hour
Found infinite forgiveness in Christ's blood,
Cleansing co-ordinate with the damned spot
(One drop of that pure blood enough to sweep
An ocean out of being, were it deep
As Hell from Heaven, and black as ink with sin—
Were it red-hot with sin, still that vermilion
Shall quench its fiery breath, and turn to snow),
And ere the night had waned—nay the same hour
His heart of midnight was baptized in joy.

Or such was his, who erewhile traversing
The desert, drawn by the soft bands of grace,
Led by the hand of Hope, Hope lit by Faith,
(For dimly did Faith thro' the snowy cloud
That circled round her brow unveil Hope's star)

Came to pay adoration to his God.
And now, as erst, the temple service o'er,
And out of sight its topmost pinnacle,
Two deserts are before him—burning sands
And the waste howling wilderness without,
And that were nothing to the waste within.
Can you not see him in his chariot now?
He sitteth as a prince and as a poor man :
Princely, for that's his state and quality ;
Princely, for 'tis the noblest act of man,
High independence, and true dignity,
To fix on God all his dependency :
And poor he was, not having the true riches ;
And poor, yet rich, for he was poor in spirit,
And humble as the poorest man on earth,
There shone the prince out of his poverty :
Faithful he was, for he still look'd for God ;
Mournful he was, for that his own heart's sorrow
Was circling round the sorrows of another,
Yet could not enter in, and in that whirlpool—

Which drowns all sorrow in comparison,
Which draws all sorrow in, save that which will
 not,
Not to destroy but change to ecstasy—
Find undivided rest, serenest joy.

An Eye is down upon the labyrinth
Where sorrow in soft mazes shrouds herself ;
An Ear if open to the whisperings
Of silence, deep in importunity,
In orisons unutter'd and still sighs
Loud as archangel's trumpet in the ear
Of infinite and omnipresent Love ;
A Hand is by to give the guiding thread,
Dispart the thick mists, and let morning break
Upon the soul, as on some valley low
The hot and lazy-brooding morn dissolves
The mantle of the laced and woven mists,
Or with her chariot wheels rolls back the clouds,
And with her soft wings makes way for the sun,

Who thence all day unwonted bridal holds.
So, in the time of love, and at the voice
Of heavenly messenger the thread receiving
To pass to him perplext and labyrinth-lost,
The white cloud, Faith's fair forehead cincturing
And somewhat weighting down her eyelids, rose
And all at once Hope's Morning Star undrest ;
Before whose beams Sorrow fled breathless, and,
As I thought, plunged into a neighbouring fount,
Whose subterranean waters bore her off
Into the midmost sea, unheard of more ;
Nay, rather, since things spiritual take
The contrary course of natural,
First he believed and let his weight of sin
Sink like a mountain into midmost ocean—
Sink in the ocean of Christ's precious blood ;
Then did he take faith's waters from the fountain,
Type of the sprinkling of the soul from sin :
Or since Christ's blood fountain and ocean are,
The fountain open'd for iniquity,

Ocean where memory of sin is lost,
Then Sorrow plunged into that ocean'd Fount
Thenceforth to perish of her native self ;
And spangling joy dash'd in pure radiancy
And silvery wreaths of praise up to her Lord
And laid her down in glad abeyance ; then
Sprang up again in youthful buoyancy
Of freedom fetterless—unchain'd—seraphic :
Oft to His Eye look'd up with ravishment,
And then as oft look'd low, in calm amaze,
And her head buried in the lap of Love.

Two things there were most beautiful to look at :
First did a Hand, which as I saw, was pierced,
As it belongèd to 'a Man of Sorrows,'
Yet animate with spirit, as 't had been
Fill'd with the Spirit of the holy God,
From off the heart withdrawn the cumbering spirit,
Dismantle Sorrow of her heaviness
And lay her dull suit by ; and in its stead

Donn'd the white flowing mantling robes of praise
Whose folds transparent were—yet tangible,
Real—but all spirit ; ' beauty for ashes gave
The oil of joy for mourning.'

Then o'er this work—

His work, the Lord his God rejoiced with joy
And rested in His love and joy'd with singing.
As after rain in summer-tide the sheen
Along the mountain side, on every bank,
Inlet or outlet, rests and lays its bosom
To the moist glistening bosom of soft herbs ;
Or as in harvest-heat the cloud of dew
Throws its fresh-spangled mantle over earth
And nurtures her beneath its silver wings :
So over the dry barren heart of man—
The heart once crush'd by the Divine footstep
In love, that it might cast its fragrance sweet
Up to the heavens and enamel their plains—
So o'er this heart—this herb—this work, the pro-
duct

Of infinite arrangement, wisdom, love,
God rests, not without thought—He ponders it ;
Not passingly—He rests—He dwells on it ;
Surveys it with Divine complacency,
Shines on it with all-nurturing radiancy,
He to the lowly springing glistening heart
Lays His own bosom—to His raised flower !
How do the Heavens to man's heart stoop down,
Man's heart take neighbourhood with Heaven's
throne !

Such was the Ethiop's joy in solitude—
No, not alone, nor ever less alone
Than when alone, for that God was with him,
With Whose bright Presence solitude was fill'd.
Now joy was in his heart, joy in his eye ;
He drank such joy from Sorrow's stream as made
Both deserts glad and blossom as the rose.

Such was the joy that from Samaria's stones,
Smitten as with a wand, burst forth in streams,
When, sunk Jerusalem ! thy rival's streets
Repeopled were with living witnesses
And with such joy, as when the mountain waves
Lift up their voice and clap their hands on high,
Wave multitudinous outvying wave ;
Like them, they threw their mighty spray of praise
Up to the Eternal Throne.

And sometimes do joy present and to come
Take nearest neighbourhood, not parted more
Than are two meadows by the hawthorn bloom,
To the which they wave tall grasses and rich flowers
And 'neath the perfume kiss. Such joy was his,
The doom'd and dying at the just hand of man,
By God bid live ; while-ere the criminal,

And now the advocate ; while-ere man's robber,
And now Christ's righter. His was a wondrous
lot—

One moment to be dipp'd in Hell, the next
Baptized in Heaven ! How did his two joys meet
And kiss beneath the purple of Christ's thorns !
The doom'd to-day, to-day the saved, to-day
In Paradise with Christ ! “ Lord,” be my prayer,
“ Remember me,” as Thou rememb'redest him !

O ! it would take the honey of all truth
To tell the composite of present joy.
If ever child had felt a father's frown,
And then forgiveness ; nor forgiveness only,
But all the fresh tide of a father's love,
That deep stern tender love, immoveable
As bands of brass to bind them into one ;
If ever child had felt a father's kiss

Wet with a father's tears, and in the embrace
Felt all its wrong forgiven—wrong forgotten,
And he upon that father's breast was one
Had never err'd—had never lost home's joys,
Ever had been compass'd in a father's arms,
It would a little tell of present joy,
As would a drop the sea—a star the sun.
But well I ween the joy 's the joy of one
Who from an enemy becomes a son.

Then add to this that inner tide of joy
That from the wellings of the spirit flows
And floods the gladden'd heart—the consciousness
Of change divine and of divine indwelling.
Not only the new name, the name of son
But the new nature, crying, 'Abba, Father'—
Voice of the Spirit of the Son within ;
And that same nature ever gathering progress
And likeness to the Ideal—The Son of sons ;
The earnest of the Spirit and the seal—

Seal of adoption, sonship, heirship, heaven ;
The comforts of the Spirit, and the calm
The deep abiding dwelling love of God.
And let this joy kindle or kindled be
By hope, on tiptoe standing on this earth,
With outstretch'd neck fond-gazing into heaven,
With outstretch'd arm fast-clasping things divine ;
And let it overflow with the assurance
Of glory waiting for the sons of God.
More—let the stream of joy within our bosoms
Have boundaries so broad as might content
Heart of the highest angel for its span—
Behind, the everlasting hills ; before,
The everlasting hills ! Let—let our joy
Flow from that living rock of liquid light
Whose base eternal is—let it be back'd
By the free choice, the everlasting love,
The sovereign election of Jehovah ;
Joy's rearward be the God of Israel.
In front—the everlasting hills ! The home

Laid up in heaven—the inheritance
Reserved for sons as they reserved for it,
The incorruptible and undefiled,
That fadeth not away—the home with God
Eternal in the heavens !

Or let our joy
Flow on between these lasting bounds, its breadth
Equal its length. Let it flow up to God
And gathering folds of light reflect His Presence,
Else were its waters canopied in cloud,
Sunless and dark. On one side let it give back
The flashings of that mountain of pure pearl
Set in eternity and ever spangling
With the dew-drops of its Eternal Morn ;
Or let it dart its reflex shafts of gold
Along that solid wall of glassy white,
As at sun-rise or set the mountain-clouds
Are edged with running molten golden flame ;
And on the other side—beneath all Heaven
Let it lie ravish'd in mute wonderment,

Unspeakable, of what shall be, reflecting
The full of heavenly glory : such art thou, Joy !
Thou hast the two eternities to rest on,
And underneath thy course the Eternal Spirit !
And yet thou often art a shipwreck'd thing,
And, joyless joy ! thou steerest for thy haven
To the land far away, where thou shalt be
The joyful thing thou art, and on thy brow
Wear never sorrow more.

Flow on, sweet stream !

Strange stream art thou ! that out of Heaven coming
Dost choose this dry and alien watercourse—
Traverse this hollow heart and all its void
Fill to the full of sweetest overflow.
Strange stream art thou ! that in this narrow band,
A fathom long, dost lie, and yet dost own
Such boundless boundary that thou canst date
From everlasting to eternity !
Flow on, sweet stream ! flow on ! this bosom course
Till we find joy in heaven.

THEN what of that—

The yet to be—to come ; coming—the never—

The never-waning—the eternal joy ?

As of salvation's plan, so of its bliss,

Eye hath not seen, nor heard the ear of man,

Nor hath the heart of man conceived that joy !

Which God hath yet revealèd by His Spirit,

And to us given intimation clear,

Hath in us dropp'd the golden elixir—

Foretaste and earnest of the yet to come

Eternal joy !

The sight of Jesus here
Puts out our Hell and makes all Heaven appear,
Gives here the spring of everlasting joy ;
But there, the unfading bloom—the eternal summer !

Two things there are which now joy's risings curb,
Make her less like herself, that men mistake her
Nor other deem her than her counterfeit—
Ill-cloakèd heaviness ; and these twain are
Time and the ocean ; these her risings mar.

For joy, within having eternity,
Is cumber'd round with the dull body of time,
Thro' which she oft essays loophole to find
Whence she may out into infinity :
But ever to be borne back by time's bars
Makes her heave leaden sighs—weep iron tears.

And here, too much joy's like a barque at sea ;
Now whitening in the calm—the sun, and now

Darkening upon the fretted mountain wave,
Yet that can never founder—'tis God's joy.
Or rather 'tis the very sea itself ;
It has, like that, its risings and its fallings,
Like that, its sunlight and its tempest hour ;
Sometimes lies low and lets Heaven mirror there ;
Then all is dark, nor sun nor stars appear ;
Now all is spangling as in love with Heaven
And Heaven with it ; now every spangle's out
And it is leaven'd with woe's dull cold leaven ;
Now does it circle, in its fun and frolic,
Arches for Heaven, and lay silvery wreaths
On Heaven's front—her bridal blossoms meet
Her Bridegroom's brow ; 'tis as it were on tiptoe
Of Heaven's embrace—in reach of Heaven itself ;
Then is it low as Hell, 't has lost its love
And it sinks down a bodiless poor thing
Unlike its native self—unclasp'd—undone.
O ! here our joy's a sea ! It has its storms,
For sin rides in the wind.

But there no time shall stop the swell of joy
No ocean spoil her rest. No time : I saw
A mighty angel with one foot on earth
The other on the sea, clothed with a cloud,
Upon his head a rainbow, and his face
Was as the sun, his feet pillars of fire,
Lift up his hand to Heaven and swear by Him
Who sitteth on the Throne and lives for ever,
' There should be time no longer.'

There, no sea ;

For a new Heaven I saw and a new earth,
' For the first Heaven and the first earth were
fled,
And there was no more sea.' No element there
Of change, where change is not. Joy's storm is
o'er—

Her ocean's empty ! or rather her left waters
Shall never more lose their propriety,
Since sin, that thing more subtile than the wind,
Infusive more than baneful hydrogen,

Outstripping thought as thought the lightning-flash,
Yet free to ride thought on (unconscious of
The weight it bears, deeming it only light)
Into Hell's burning and precipitate chasm,
Can lash her pure waves into storm no more :
And Heaven, moulded into unison,
Shall nothing have to put her in remembrance
Of the vex'd elements that rack'd her birth
And cradled her in storm for waveless rest.

There joy is like a river—broad as that—
Brimming as that—glassy and deep as that.
There is a river, the full streams whereof
Make glad the city of our God ; whose waters,
From the Perpetual Fount for ever flowing,
Glide over Heaven's golden glassy pavements,
Among her emerald meads, thro' infinite space,
Carrying eternal life and love and joy.

But as I look'd I was as one amazed
To gaze upon that River ! To mine eye
It was compounded of all elements
(If things in Heaven have component parts,
Where each itself is perfect—wanting nothing)
Baffling description. Love was there, joy, peace ;
Like the three bands of Heaven's painted bow
These did their three streams all unite in one,
Their waters interfused yet separate ;
And I thought then is this the threefold cord
That with its golden band does all worlds hold
In union with God.

But as I look'd,
There were with these, blended yet separate,
Four other streams or more, which did mine eye
So dazzle that I scarce could glance on them.
Wisdom was one, whose translucent waters
Show'd and yet hid their depth ; with this flow'd
Truth

Transparent as the other ; and on them twain
Leant all the River its eternal strength ;
For while the one channell'd as 'twere its course,
The other in its course held it secure ;
But either in itself inviolate.

Then came there down a mighty flowing stream,
As 't had been waves of the sea for multitude ;
Solid like them and bearing all before it,
But not like them disturb'd ; unbroken, silent,
Winning its mighty way by innate virtue ;
Whose waves of molten gold pass thro' all Heaven
Uttering eternal changeless equity ;
And this I read, ' The Righteousness of God.'

Midmost from out the Eternal Fount flow'd Love,
Whose stream surpasseth knowledge, for its
breadth
And length and depth and height beyond all
thought,

Much more all speech ; so that the highest angel,
Archangel mid the lofty seraphim,
Or loftiest mid the flaming cherubim,
Or, whether be loftier, highest saint redeem'd,
Tastes but its rivulets (which permeate
Their wondering pure bosoms) and scarce these—
Such is the finite to the Infinite—
Its drops, each drop—a stream, each stream—an
ocean,
That lifts its waves of love up to the Fountain,
And dies—nay, lives upon its shores—the margin
Of the untold Perpetual Fount of Love.

Then was there one no eye could look upon
For dazzling whiteness—dreadful purity.
So white it was these heavens compared were black,
So pure its drops that had they sprinkled Heaven,
At midnight when the stars light their chaste fires,
They had put out those myriad myriad eyes,
Though each had shone with a resplendency

Equal Aldeboran, or Sirius,
Or those that wander through the wondering
 Heavens ;
And in their place held empire of light
That had the moon confounded and the day
Driven to darkness, though it had been back'd
By ten times more than the sun's wonted orb,
Thence paled—ashamèd—darkenèd—put out.
This flow'd along with all the other streams
That made that mighty River, severèd
By intense purity, terrible to see,
And which the eagle glance of the archangel
Cannot endure : he, o'er his radiant brow
Unfolds his veiling wings and stoops his head,
And taking to himself humility,
The grace that strengthens most and nearest draws
To the Eternal Presence, stands abased.
Yet does each other stream look into it,
And each doth see itself transparent with
This stream of crystal, terrible to see.

In union fast with these a mighty stream
Roll'd its vast easy strength along, its waters
Clothed with the thunder of Almighty Power.
This to all worlds usher'd the mighty fiat
That call'd them into being ; this it is
That in the hollow of its wave doth hold
The cycle of all worlds, in firm adjustment
To their first launch into the abyss of space ;
'Tis this that echoes through the firmament
And shoreless abyssms of infinity
The Almighty Power of God ; measured by which
Oceans are water-drops, the mountains dust
Light as a grain, and the unmeted heavens
Spann'd as a child would span its tiny ball ;
This, interfused with grace, all things bring
back
To the Eternal Sceptre, onward rolling
Its voice of many waters as the voice
Of mighty thunderings saying, ' Alleluia !
For the LORD GOD omnipotent doth reign.'

While with it, smooth as Siloa's stilly wave,
Gentleness, softly-going, wound its way
And over all laid its light silken bands,
Weaving its waters most like gossamer ;
O'er and through which all other waters pass'd ;
(In mute abeyance Power holding most ;
For, like the silver-edgèd thunder-cloud,
Most chiefly did it carol with light wave
Transparent, sapphire, on the thunder-wave
Of that all-potent stream, whose many echoes
Fell on the ear apart—articulate ;)
So that each sound of all the other streams
Was heard distinctly separate, their voices
Blending in harmony divine, while each
Struck in its turn the key-note of His praise
' Who dwelleth in light inaccessible,
Whom no man hath seen or can see ;' and each
Did, to the highest, hymn His lasting Name.

Then, too, I saw those twain that from the Fount

Come, yet at once are the results of these :
Eternal being have they in the Fount :
Peace from the God of peace flow'd like a river ;
Joy from a God who dwells in infinite bliss
Flow'd through all Heaven spreading light and joy.
Yet not alone eternal principles—
Ingredients, each stream, of Heaven's river
Are they, but from those several rivers flow,
And from each several conjunction,
And from the harmony of all with all.
So that the peace and joy there is in Heaven
Is infinite multiplied by infinites,
And so with ravishing excess of joy,
And interwoven peace all Heaven o'erfloods.

Then round these waters circling lay a stream,
Most like the one I saw flow undermost,
Of mighty breadth and beauty, from the Fount
Issuing, and round them in such easy curve
As gives expansion e'en to infinite

Flow'd like a zone, itself of silvery white,
Snow-white, and yet most exquisite colouring
Most various taking, as o'er all it wound—
Hues like the bow that's set in Heaven's front,
But these were dipp'd in Heaven—the Heaven of
 heavens !

This was the girdle of His Faithfulness.
And still o'er this—in this—most rarely blent
Lay yet another cincture of pure gold,
Stream of the mightiest, as seen of erst,
Whose every wave to Heaven doth legislate
Perfection purest—all unalterable.
This was the girdle of His Righteousness.

Then as I stood amazed and in a trance
I saw the rivers of these mighty waters
The River of the Spirit were—not less ;
Out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb
Proceeding, clear as crystal. Where they flow,

Flows there eternal and perennial life
Anointing Heaven with life ; where they touch,
Tho' it had been drought, as no drought in
summer
Can liken, the soul's drought—soul's dearth—soul's
death,
Tho' it were nigh to burning as the stubble,
Or tho' it were incased in adamant,
If but to touch those waters, 'twere to live :
And therefore it is call'd 'The River of
Water of Life'—life-issuing as it flows.
It flows forth-bearing life—the Spirit's breath,
And love—the very being of the Spirit,
And peace—as 'twere the very Spirit's calm,
And joy—the every motion of the Spirit ;
Joy ! not earth's aery embodiment,
Sound nothingness that feeds on vacancy,
But palpable food and drunk in of our spirits
In Heaven, as here we feed on common air.
As gently quiver through the empyrean

Thy wings, Celestial Dove ! poised in love,
Joy's gentle undulations fill all Heaven.

But most of all to finite apprehension,
Perhaps to Infinite, was the river love ;
Because its Fount was Love, and most of all
Did love to make love known, therefore did yield
Its love equal to self from out itself—
A Heaven of love itself did yield a Heaven :
Because moreo'er its channel was of love
Equal the Fount ; nor was it robbery
That the pure streams of Love equality
Did with Love's own Fount claim—nay, they are
one—

One Fount—one Stream—one Ocean—one Love :
And love, because the River of the Spirit—
Life and love issuing ; One will'd the Love,
One was the Love, and One gave the Love :
And love it was, because that potent grace

And all-transforming floods our new being ; love
From the Original Fount, thro' the broad Stream,
Ta'en by the Spirit up and made to flow
Thro' the sin-shaken and swept heart of man ;
As by Heaven's habitants 'tis quaff'd in pure
Celestial goblets of all senses open
To drink continuous draughts of Living Water.
And therefore was it most the River of Love,
Because Love more than all doth realize
The idea of God—to have love is to have all :
The River therefore Love. This is the stream
That thro' the city of our God doth flow,
As thro' His Church below and every bosom
Of His redeemed, gladdening as it goes.
And, as I thought, the while mine eye intent
Did gaze upon that twofold wondrous girdle,
The zone of love it was, binding alike
All things in Heaven and Earth, and over all :
This was the very bond of perfectness :
Love as it seem'd was first, midmost, and last.

Nor wonder then that off the surface rose
Joy like a river, and all Heaven fill'd
To overflowing with the joy of God :
Essential joy, because the joy of God ;
Eternal joy—joy springing from the womb
Of everlasting, without birth or end
Or change—joy waning never—rising ever,
And which the height and infinite of Heaven
Fills to the full.

Thus was that ancient River paved with Love,
Interminable Strength, unbroken Peace,
Righteousness flooding Heaven, as the waves
Their mantle spread over the mighty deep ;
And with them Fear—awe from the Throne of God
Proceeding—pass'd adown and held all Heaven
In lowly reverential love of Him

Who spake Creation into being ; there
Infinite Wisdom, and Eternal Truth,
And not less endless Life, unceasing Joy ;
Holiness like a diadem crown'd all.

These thro' the bosom of all Heaven flow,
And down they come to this parch'd wilderness,
And not in rivulets refreshing only,
But in a broad deep stream—wide as the East
Is from the West ; immeasurably long,
As from everlasting is to everlasting ;
Deep, for it reach'd the lowest depth of Hell ;
And high it was as Heaven above the earth ;
It laved Heaven's throne, yet swept the deep of
Hell.

Tho' what to angels and to crownèd saints
Rivers and oceans are, to minds more finite
Are rivulets of love, less comprehended.
Only I saw that when it touch'd this earth,
Its channel then was laid in bright vermilion
And all its waters pavèd were with purple ;

The which to see, the tide of sin grew faint ;
The which to touch, the tide of sin was swept
Back from its usurp'd tenure, and its scum
Went circling down into the pool of Hell.
In Heaven 'tis love as it were crystal, from
The Fount of Love issuing ; here, Love bleed-
ing—
Love in its own life dyed, ever to live.

This from the Fount. That Fount no tongue
may tell
On this side Heaven (tho' His Eternal Power
And Godhead by His works are rightly seen)
Save as earth saw, eye to eye, face to face,
'God manifest in the flesh,' and read God's love
In the surrender of His only Son :
Save as laid open in His Holy Book
Whose words are syllabled with inspiration :
Save as it is revealèd by the Spirit,

Who on the blank and marble heart of man
Writes with His finger all the words of life.

This then the stream that gladdens earth and
Heaven :
That to the lips of Time offers its goblet
Golden with joy and immortality ;
And that all Heaven fills with intense rapture
That would aught finite break to fragments ; there
Floods to the full the arch of infinite.

But who shall speak of the eternal joy !
What bosom compass can the eternal river !
Is it that every attribute of God,
That now lies claspèd by the love of Christ,
So that our weak hearts may embrace them all
And e'en a child may take them in possession,

Shall then, the zone undone, in all their vastness—
Each in its own unfear'd distinctiveness,
Sweep thro' our bosoms—bosoms as of sons ;
And we, being then all Christ's—our very being
Baptized into His death—His life—His love—
His will—His likeness—His identity,
Shall with unclaspèd ecstasy drink in
The separate elements of God's perfections ;
Dive in the depths of the Eternal Wisdom—
Ride on the whirlwind of His Power, nor fear—
Be to Eternal Righteousness laid bare—
Behold His Holiness, nor be consumed—
Walk hand in hand with Truth and Faithfulness—
And in His Love—His Love ! lie and be lost ?
Shall it be so ? We know not what shall be ;
But this—that what Christ is, He ever shall be
To His Redeemed. The river of His love
If it be crimson here yet is it crystal ;
And there, in Heaven, if crystal, crimson still :
For I beheld, and lo, midst Heaven's throne

Stood there a Lamb as slain—the which to see
All Heaven's arches rang with the eternal song,
All Heaven's harps swept with one breath of
praise,
'For Thou wast slain.' That word shall wake all
Heaven—

The living creatures, the angelic hosts,
The blood-bought bosom of the Church of Christ,
And (be it spoken in all reverence)
His who did yield the Lamb for sacrifice—
That word, 'wast slain,' 'wast slain,' shall wake
all Heaven
To highest—newest—ever-deepening rapture,
As every cycle doth the sum tell off
Untold eternity.

But never—never on this lowly earth
Can mortal bosom know all Heaven's joy!
Never drink in the mighty vasty depths
Of God's ungirt—unflooded attributes!

What can it know then of the Fount—Joy's
source—

The unveil'd presence of the Lord Jehovah ?

And yet joy now, and then, are the same joy.
Here is our joy in embryo, there born ;
Or here it is a babe, there a full man ;
Here hath it all its limbs perfect, as there ;
But here our joy is weak, there 'twill be strong.
And here it lives on the same food as there :
It liveth here upon the harmony
Of God's perfections by the death of Christ
Wrought to its sustenance, or, we might say,
Here doth it live upon the love of Christ
Which ever from its flowing breast doth yield
Twofolded sustenance—the harmony
Of God's perfections all sustain'd, sustaining ;
And then His Presence ! which if dim it be,
Yet it is ravishing beyond degree,
And infant Joy lies on its Father's breast—

Its Saviour's (for no likeness of our God
May ever cross our least-thought's vestibule)
Asleep for love ; or with its tiny hands
Doth twine the seven locks of His perfections,
Fearless in fondness. And there, I shall think,
The love of Christ shall food be for Joy's man-
hood ;

And, while to see the Saviour as He is
Shall change us to the same similitude,
To lie on His uncover'd bosom shall
Open to view the full of God's perfections,
And the unveilèd presence of our God.
His bosom shall the glass—the mirror—be
Through which I shall those mighty waters see,
And more—the open Fount of Deity !
On which I'll lie and let those mighty streams
Course through my bosom, till Joy like a river,
Perpetual as that, growing as that,
And ever-widening with eternity,
Shall roll its ravish'd waves up to the Fount

And, wearying never, harp His golden praise
'WHO WAS, AND IS, AND IS TO COME,' Who
And has redeem'd us by His blood to God—
Shall on the margin of that circling Fount—
The inaccessible of Light Divine
Pour out its golden-glassy-threaded waves
Instinct with love and spirit-staying peace
Into the bosom of All-Love, and wake
Eternity with hymning forth His praise.

Having the harp of God, O ! may I stand
Upon the sea of glass mingled with fire,
And sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb !
A sea it is for semblance, for in Heaven
Shall be no more the element of sea ;
A sea it is for very boundlessness :
A sea it is because 'tis fathomless ;
A sea of glass—unlike all other seas ;
Solid as is the impervious hyaline,

As imperturbable, as motionless ;
And then reflective as the mirroring crystal.

Reflected in that boundless hyaline—
That motionless—transparent—solid sea,
Is seen from off the Throne of God ‘A LAMB
AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN,’ filling the abyss of space,
As that the height, with Christ’s unmeasured love,
Uncomprehended still, beyond all thought
And bound of knowledge ; shining with glory—
With all that God is—the essential glory
That Jesus had with God ere the world was.
Reflected there is seen a countless throng—
Palms in their hands and clad in robes of white,
For light and number as the stars of Heaven ;
Each shining in the righteousness of Christ ;
Each comely with the Saviour’s comeliness ;
Each burning bright as by the Spirit of God ;
Casting their crowns before the throne of God
And giving adoration to the Lamb.

And there, reflected in that mystic sea,
Lies all the Providence of God reveal'd.
Each glassy wave reflects His goodness, wisdom,
His love and power—His minutest act—
His complex work—to bring each saint redeem'd
Out of the wilderness and scorch of Hell,
Past sin—past Satan—and past self combined,
Up to the land of God's ethereal glory.

In that I saw 'twas glass mingled with fire,
It did the holiness of God portray
And His incomprehensibility.
So did the fire prove the purity
And light the ocean of Christ's perfect sorrow.
So does the fire prove the work of Christ ;
It passes through the white robes of the saints,
Nor burns, but lights ; it is Christ's righteousness.
And so with every providence of God ;
'Tis as a crystal from the throne of God
With a flame in it ; 'tis so clear and yet

So pure—so holy ; 'tis as the day
So manifest—the very work of God ;
Yet being His—taken from off Heaven's altar—
So hallowed is, it burns with holy light ;
'Tis as the day lit with the fiery sun.

Upon the sea of glass, O ! I would stand
And ever gaze upon Emmanuel,
As upward, downward, or around, mine eye
Took in the scope and circuit of all Heaven ;
There would I stand and let the crystal river
From out the throne of God and of the Lamb
O'erflow me with the mystic waves of life.

Were there a blade of grass, could such thing be
In Heaven, water'd by that crystal stream,
It would be ever-emerald, instinct
With love and joy, and to the passing feet
Of Jesus follow'd by His myriad saints .

Would never break—could never there be a
Being enrobed in immortality,

Would only breathe forth love and lowliness

I would that I might sit

On Heaven's lowest stair, like such a flower,

And, looking down upon the waters mirrorin

The love of God—the eternal depth of Love

Might feel the air of Jesus passing by

And be drawn into the vacance it would mal

Even in Heaven—love so rarified

By His near Presence outcasting all things e

Joy even, were it exquisite as Heaven,

And I should be drawn to follow in His trai

Laid on His very bosom.

WOULD I might sleep—

I would not break my dream—but it must pass !
Better still tongue, closed lips, and veiled wings
Across the glance of Heaven.

But lest I seem to tread in fairyland
And all too much fancy prefer to truth,
Again mine eye would gaze—would glance on
Heaven.

There shall be no more sin : that hated thing
Sin shall no more be found ; sin that has wrought

Such dire confusion in this lower world ;
Sin that has scaled the very throne of God
And from the bosom of the Eternal brought
The eternal Son of God ; sin that has made
A lasting Hell ; sin shall no more be found.
Buried in infinite unfathom'd space,
Sunk in the surges of eternal flame,
Revolving only in its hopeless Hell,
Dungeon'd in living death, sin shall no more
Suspire the air of God, were it a breath
Small as an insect draws : so in all Heaven
The very breath of sin can never enter,
The very thought of sin can never come,
Sin being beingless, except to lie
In its own hated Hell.

Sin being not,
Seeing the curse causeless can never come,
There shall be no more curse. No more the frown
Shall gather on a Father's brow, no more
The righteous sentence pass those lips to doom.

Firm as the promise bound with Heaven's bow,
That this our earth shall never more be drown'd,
So doth the everlasting covenant stand,
'There shall be no more curse.' There, no more
death ;

Sorrow no more, nor crying ; pain no more ;
Hunger no more, nor thirst ; nor the sun's heat.
Nor only shall earth's misery be out,
But shall her weakness wane—her weariness ;
No need to lay her weary head to rest
Upon the pillow of the curtain'd night ;
'There shall be no night there.' There time on
more.

There shall be no more sea. Nay, shall this earth
And Heaven not be. 'I saw a great white throne
And Him who sat thereon, from whose face fled
The earth and Heaven away, and there was found
No place for them.' Nay, more, the memory
Of earth and Heaven be out, and their fore-being
Shall never come to mind. O ! wondrous world

Shall that new earth and Heaven be, where
 sin

Is not, nor curse, nor death, nor pain, nor sorrow,
Nor want, nor weakness, nor idea of change,
Nor of what has been ! But this is little,
Had it without these all the sweets of earth,
To what Heaven is. Thou changeless, deathless
 world,

The unseen ! the sinless and the sorrowless !
Where never can a frown ripple thine azure,
Where never can a thought suspire of ill
Throughout the infinite of space or period,
What art thou Heaven ? Faileth the eye to see,
The lips to speak, the thought to think, what art
 thou !

What art thou, Heaven ! O who shall tell thine
 ‘ art ! ’

And whiles the what thou ‘ art not ’ yet untold ?

Two things there are that make this earth a Heaven,
Two things, that, take them out, and Heaven were
not,

Which yet with us in Heaven cannot be.

Can it be so ? without them Heaven were not,

And yet in Heaven they can never be !

And must we part ? It were a little thing

That Heaven should be reft of all things hateful,

But to be reft of that which made Heaven ours

Makes Heaven a thing apart—seemeth to say

That what had touch'd this earth, tho' heavenly,

Is too assoil'd for Heaven ! And must we part—

Thou that I've look'd on—thou whose liquid eye

Hath look'd into my inmost soul and gone

And read the inner Heaven and brought me
down

The love of God in Christ and laid the balm

Fast to my bleeding heart—and must we part ?

And must we part—thou that hast borne me on

My perilous way ? Thou who hast helmeted

This else cleft forehead—thou that this drifting
barque

Fast anchor'd hast in Heaven—and must we part?

Fair Faith! Fond Hope! we must—we must—
we part—

Part? Never. Deathless Faith! Undying Hope!

O! it were worth all worlds to see that parting

Which while it is, is not! Methought I saw

From the first bourn of Eden to time's end

Unwearying Faith lead up to Heaven's portals

Each separate soul redeem'd, and back again

Upon her more than angel-embassage,

Till that the last was gather'd into Heaven.

Methought I saw undaunted Hope inspire

From the first bourn of Eden to time's end

The soul of each believer, heralding

Each to the pearly gates, then back again

Till that the last was gather'd inside Heaven.

Then, methought, Faith, white-robed, with her
white hand

Led up a multitude no man could number,
And Hope, star-crested, went in the forefront,
Tow'rds One who sat upon a great white Throne.
And as they near'd, methought that Faith and
Hope

Faded in light ineffable and were not—
Seem'd not to be—and all that countless throng,
Past looking for their leaders, ravish'd were
And lost as in the sight of One they loved—
Bent and cast down their crowns before the Lamb,
Enamour'd of His Presence.

Then wonder'd I the what should come of them—
Those heaven-sent guardians and kind ministers,
For I saw not their place, and I was sad.
Whereon asleep I fell, and in my dream
It was the early morn, before sunrise,
And in the Heavens rode two stars alone,
As they would master day, and on their fellows
For ever charge pusillanimity,

So royally they rode the Heavens thro'.
But as the sky grew streak'd, and now the dawn
'Gan harbinger day's ruler, as I saw,
They from their zenith pass'd, nor thought it
shame

To pale their liquid fires, but grew faint-hued,
Fading to amber, lessening more and more,
Till as the sun rose up they were not : only
As they went out I saw the two were one.
Then thought I, nature true to spirit is :
These twain, or as they seem'd in fading—one,
Have, ever since the world was, augur'd in
The full-eyed conquering day, day's harbingers,
And while they paled their lights and were not,
were ;

And thro' all thousand years rose day by day
And to the sun their saintly office did.
So Faith and Hope—twin stars ! since Adam's fall
A triple work have done : sinners have led
Up to the Saviour, and in His presence vanish'd—

Were not—from sight removed, He the sole Sun :
Sinners, by day, by night, on the warm bosom,
The bright, the beamy, of that Sun have laid,
And were not : sinners have to Heaven taken,
Peopling Paradise with redeemèd saints,
And were not : and once more they herald forth
Before the great white throne the whole redeem'd,
And are not—are not ? then day's harbingers
Are not, that ever are ! Like them, do these
Lay off the white robes of their saintly office
And take His veil of light, whose ample folds
Lustre all worlds and most the courts of Heaven,
And in the presence of the Sun of suns
Are lost, but are—unseen, but being still :
Thus faith and hope are swallow'd up in sight,
While in sight still they live a peerless being.
In that I saw two stars did one become ;
Some part it did my fancy discipline
That never is there but one morning star :
But mostly did it show that Faith and Hope,

Whether in Heaven they are not or else are—
Are lost or take embodiment in sight,
Yet as near office and sweet neighbourhood
Had they on earth, in Heaven shall be one.
They shall be laid upon one funeral pyre
If they must die, or rather, like the phoenix,
Rise from the ashes and be one in Heaven ;
They shall be laid upon one bridal pyre—
His sight ' Whose eyes are as a flame of fire.'

And one thing more in Heaven is there not,
Save it be faint and soon to die away,
That in God's order here holds highest place,
Nay, I had said, holds Heaven in embrace.
'Tis Prayer. O ! prayerless, faithless, hopeless
Heaven,
While yet the Heaven of Faith and Hope and
Prayer,
How dost thou beggar all our heart's conceit !
How dost thou outlaw even thine own children

Nor deem them worthy the inheritance ;
Unless perchance they pass to other forms,
And, in them, breathe thy sweet Elysium !
So, as it seem'd Prayer that had gone from earth
To Heaven, from Heaven to the throne of God,
That so weak was and yet so powerful,
So simple was and yet so sovereign,
Prayer that could bring all Heaven, as 'twere,
 down,
Prayer that could raise the beggar to God's throne,
When this poor world shall shuffle out of being,
Then Prayer shall change its dress, and that which
 used
Invisible to pierce the inner Heavens
Shall then put on the flowing robes of Praise,
And Prayer no longer be : though now a while
In Heaven are there heard soft notes, low notes
(Though, where they fall, full-voiced and resonant,
Of martyrs from beneath the altar crying)
As of distress where never moan can be ;

Heaven's cadences of Faith and Hope are they,
Sighs without sorrow as of souls in bliss
Breathing essential prayer and bodiless,
As though, being heaven-born, on the wings of
souls

In Paradise it should be borne to rest,
Not knowing when it changed to lasting Praise.

What art thou, Heaven! Faileth the eye to
see,
The lips to speak, the thoughts to think what art
thou.

I think I will not speak of thee—not mar
Thy Heaven, Heaven! with my earthliness.
Farewell, abodes of joy! where saints shall
see

Their Saviour face to face and be with God.
Farewell, abodes of peace! where pilgrims rest,
Led by the Saviour to life-giving founts.
Farewell, abodes of light! whose light is God—

God and the Lamb—ye fields of light ! farewell.

Farewell, new earth and Heaven ! Farewell, thou
city !

That comest out of Heaven from our God,

I would have sung thy glory—told thy beauty—

But now farewell—farewell.

YET there's a thing

That out of Heaven comes to this low world,
That from the womb of Sorrow takes its birth,
And makes our present joy, so fond to flag,
The joy it is, and gives it sisterhood
With joy in Heaven.

Who knows the heart of man,
Knows to fulfil. This world may teach us some-
thing,
Or rather doth He teach us by this world—

By this world's loves and sorrows, joys and griefs.
Man's nature, from the peasant to the throne,
Knows but one law in love. The presence 'tis,
Or if the absence, then the promise of
The presence of the loved. And this has kept
The chaste fire burning on the shrined heart
Through long long years of more than widowhood :
'Gainst all the wiles of man impregnable
Or of man's Tempter. Our natural love
Hangs on a thread—the presence of the loved,
If absent, on the promise of that presence—
Which either fate may sever in a moment,
Or the wild winds that course the heart of man
Snap with a stroke more pitiless than death.
And, like it, does our spiritual love
Hang on a thread—a thread? a cord—a cable—
Firm iron—most indissoluble gold,
More than would bind this earth to those strong
Heavens,
Make them insoluble and only one.

Hangs on a thread—His Word that cannot break
That He whose love is past the love of woman—
Past father's—mother's—child's—friend's fondest
love—

Past hers whose love his own is—is himself,
Being a time removed, shall come !

‘ Shall come,’

Sweet word ! thou hast in thee the life of love ;
Out take thee, and love sinks a lifeless thing ;
Not that it dieth ever, but cannot rise
The joyous thing it is without His presence
Or promise, which is as His very presence,
Because it cannot fail but presence be.

‘ Shall come ’—sweet word ! thou bindest this
world's woes

Round Heaven's neck, and in the embrace of
Heaven

Earth's fires are out. ‘ Shall come ! ’ our transient
grief

Up-leaps, and lieth in the arms of Jesus,
And in the embrace is lost—is not—is joy.
And if joy here should somewhat lesser be,
There 'tis commensurate with infinite ;
And that our joy should now be link'd with
 Heaven's,
'Tis on the golden cord wound of His Presence ;
And He who knows that it, fond thing! would droop
Its wings and flutter to the earth, shall stay
Its leastsome fall on Heaven's security.

But more, that word doth through the gap of
 time,
To finite faculties, eternity
Bind to eternity. Four thousand years
This elder world hung on that thread of promise :
When on earth's centre, thirty years and three,
HE did the skein unravel to man's sight ;
Then bound the thread aloft so high, so firm,
That all might see yet none have power to sever ;

Then left the thread in the world's hand again.

Four thousand years 't may be, or perchance
three,

Whereof the last shall be earth's golden Sabbath,
And the whole seven make up the week of thou-
sands,

Or chance it two may be, and He shall come
To reign a thousand years, but none can tell
Save He alone Who knows, this later world
On the event hangs of His promised Presence.

Yet more, that word—sweet word ! ' shall come '
doth join

This world to Heaven, Heaven's love to this
world.

In it God looketh out of Heaven and says,
' I see on that low world a thing I love—
I love beyond all other love of Heaven ;
I see the thread entwined around that tree—
Fore-shadow'd by its prototype in Eden,

Prefigurant, tho' by lorn loving arms,
Sad in man's sadness, joyous in his joy,
Of that which bloometh in the better Eden—
The cross ! It is mine own Son's cross. My Son !
Go and unravel this. No hand but Thine
Has power in earth or Heaven that scarlet thread
To loosen from the window of my love.
The Hand that wove alone unweaves that web ;
The Hand that's pierced alone can wind that
cord ;
Thy Presence can alone discharge the Promise.'

That word—sweet word ! 'shall come' doth
animate

The all of present Joy. 'Tis Joy's helpmate ;
Doth underlie her head with one fond hand,
And with the other it doth hold her up :
When it comes then Joy comes, goes when it goes ;
Not that she faileth ever, being immortal ;
But to the overflow and flush of fulness

She riseth not save to the sound, 'He comes.'
Oft have I seen her in encounter fierce
Faint, till she caught the echo of that word ;
Oft have I seen her lie unhelmeted,
Till at the word she sprang up to new life ;
And by and by she'd don the amazon,
And all her enemies, tho' legion,
Quell with her bright aspect and piercing gaze.
And then I saw that she grew flush'd in the cheek
And put such radiance on, that well I doubted
Whether she were on earth and not in Heaven.
Ever so small a thing doth wake love's ear,
And joy doth mount or fall, doth wax or wane,
Fade to the death or flush into fresh life,
As the occasion is. Now was she waked—
She had caught the word, 'Behold'—'Behold I
come !'
Now was she at the height—was riveted ;
When fell the ravishing accent on her ear,
'Behold I come quickly !'—She's past herself—

Out of the body and like joy in Heaven—
Seem'd she to be within her Lord's embrace.
Then suddenly methought a faint hue stole
O'er her immortal bloom, as He who was
Were not—a while removed ; as when the day
Faints for the sun beneath a crossing cloud ;
As when we lose the sight of one we love :
Whereon I heard the sweet assurance given,
' Surely I come quickly ! ' At the word
Joy was at rest, at peace, stayed ; and her cheek
Grew pattern'd to the likeness of her Lord,
And with her lips she made reply, ' Amen,
Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

THE END.







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